

1970

ROBERT W. BLACKBURN

Director for Intergroup Relations, Philadelphia Public Schools,

1967 to present. Responsible to the Superintendent for the formulation, implementation and assessment of policies, programs and administrative procedures for the Board of Education in the areas of (1) equality of educational opportunity, (2) community involvement, and (3) student activism. Supervises a staff of twelve specialists in the discharge of the above duties.

Illustrative functions:

- preparation of desegregation plans for pupils and staff;
- training of central and field staff in management strategies for effective community involvement and the alleviation of intergroup tensions;
- preparation of Board Resolutions and budget documents for a variety of staff development projects;
- establishment of cooperative relationships with business and industry, civic groups and public agencies to harness community resources for the School District generally and individual schools in particular;
- development of teaching materials, curricula and packaged programs in intergroup education;
- creation of secondary school Teams for Change, composed of students, staff and parents, to develop blueprints for educational improvement at the local school level.

University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education.

Currently teaching courses in the Social Foundations of Education. Also lectures at Swarthmore College and Temple University on Issues in Urban School Administration.

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

Director, United States Peace Corps, Somali Republic, East Africa,

1964-67. Responsibility for directing Peace Corps operations in the former colonies of British and Italian Somaliland. Supervised 100 volunteers, primarily in teaching projects. Established new programs in rural health, public information

and livestock development. Formulated the National Self-Help School Construction Programme, with a complete fiscal management structure, a multi-million dollar cooperative venture involving the Peace Corps, the Somali Government and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Served for six months in the Office of Research and Evaluation, Peace Corps/Washington, evaluating programs and training overseas administrators.

Executive Director, Citizens Committee on Public Education in Philadelphia,

1960-64.. Organized and directed a citizen campaign for public school reform, with duties including staff services to program committees and various civic groups; preparation of reports and publications on school problems; testimony before legislative bodies; development of experimental projects in cooperative with the Philadelphia Public Schools; consultant services to similar organizations in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Associate Director, National Conference of Christians and Jews,

Philadelphia-New Jersey Region, 1957-60. Initiated programs in intergroup education for teachers, students, policemen, religious leaders and community organizations. During 1959-60 served as coordinator for a curriculum study at Lincoln University, Oxford, Pa. Summer 1960, faculty of University of Michigan; summer 1959, Rutgers University - both seminars in human relations for school administrators.

AFFILIATIONS

Research Council of the Great Cities Schools; Philadelphia Schoolmen's Club; National Association of Intergroup Relations Officials; Board of Directors, Philadelphia Council for International Visitors; several civic associations.

EDUCATION

Public and private schools in New York, Virginia, New Mexico and New Jersey. Honors graduate Texas Military Institute. A.B. Oberlin College. Negro College Exchange Year at Hampton Institute. M.A. University of Pennsylvania, Center for Human Relations. Further graduate study at Rutgers and the University of Maine.

PERSONAL DATA

Born in Santa Monica, California, 1935. Married to the former Barbara Marjorie Wendell of Havana, Cuba. Two children, Christopher, 13, and Samantha, 2. Social security #095-28-5081.

Blackburn Formally Hired for Schools

JUN 20 1970

The Oakland Board of Education last night formally hired Robert W. Blackburn of Philadelphia to be the public schools' deputy superintendent under a two-year contract beginning July 1.

He will be paid \$30,000 a year and will serve under Marcus Foster, another Philadelphian, who will take over as the district's superintendent on that date.

Foster, who has been associate superintendent of Philadelphia schools in charge of community relations, hand-picked Blackburn to be his deputy superintendent here.

Blackburn is currently director of the intergroup relations program for Philadelphia's public schools.

The board unanimously concurred in Foster's choice of Blackburn, said board president Mrs. Ann Corneille after the meeting.

Only five directors were present last night at the formal vote, all of them approving the contract. Director Charles Goady arrived later and director Barney Hilburn was not at the meeting.

On July 1, Dr. Spencer Benbow, who has been serving as interim superintendent, will revert to his old post of business manager of the district.

The board's decision to hire Blackburn was first made known late last month. He has been with Philadelphia's

school system for four years, working with Foster in the office of community affairs as director of staff operations.

He is white and Foster is black.

Blackburn wrote in a letter to Mrs. Corneille that his "forte is in getting people to set new goals and holding them accountable. Marcus Foster and I have a good cooperative relationship along that line.

"Marcus Foster can lift peoples' vision and inspire them to success and I can assist in insuring that we really get that success."

In another action last night, the board approved an agreement between the district and the Spanish-Speaking Unity Council under which 350 Mexican-American youths will be employed this summer.

The agreement, budgeted at \$37,810, also will establish a tutorial, mental health, recreation and cultural program, and is part of the public schools' Neighborhood Youth Corps program. The costs will be paid with federal funds.

Mrs. Corneille noted that SSUC's inclusion brings the number of positions in the schools' Neighborhood Youth Corps program to 1,400.

SSUC, in proposing its program, said that "boredom and frustration are characteristic attitudes in the long, hot summers of Mexican-American youth. Few young Chicanos can find work, few can afford the recreational activities which are available and fewer yet attend summer school.

"These problems are manifestations of the cycle of poverty in the Mexican-American community."

Foster to Get Raise, New Pact

By BEV MITCHELL

Tribune Education Writer

Oakland School Supt. Marcus Foster and Deputy Supt. Robert Blackburn will receive raises and new four-year contracts, Board of Education members decided yesterday.

In addition, the school directors filled two major administrative vacancies at the associate superintendent level.

Foster, who came here from the Philadelphia school administration approximately three years ago and still had one year to go on his initial \$42,500 contract, is being offered a new arrangement at \$47,500 per year.

As with Blackburn, more specific terms of the contract are to be discussed and agreed to at a later date, School Director Seymour Rose said in introducing the subject following a lengthy executive session of the board.

Praising the superintendent's work in Oakland, Rose said he didn't think he needed to make statements to "embellish the obvious." Foster, he said, is generally considered "what is known in the trade as a hot item."

Deputy Supt. Blackburn, who came to this city with Foster from the Philadelphia system, is also scheduled to receive a new contract. His annual wage is slated to increase from \$30,000 to \$32,000.

Blackburn was originally signed for a two-year contract, and his salary went unchanged when the arrangement was renewed last year. Now he will have a four-year contract.

Foster is known to have been approached by several major school districts in the nation seeking superintendents.

Assistant Is Wounded

NOV - 7 1973

Oakland school superintendent Marcus A. Foster was shot to death and deputy superintendent Robert W. Blackburn was badly wounded last night in what police describe as an assassination-style crossfire outside the

school district's administration building.

Police were looking for three male suspects who they say fled on foot and then in a 1957 black Chevrolet with a brown primer spot in the left rear section of the car's top.

The suspects were all described as small, young with dark complexions and shoulder-length black hair, wearing blue knit watch caps, dark pants and blue denim jackets with a white patch over the right breast. Earlier police

gave their descriptions as black adults of average height, but revised the descriptions today.

No motive for the shootings has been determined, police said. Investigators said first indications ruled out robbery as a possible motive.

Foster, 50, was pronounced dead at Highland Hospital. Blackburn, 38, who was hand-picked by Foster for the deputy superintendency after they worked together in the Philadelphia public schools, underwent more than two hours of surgery at Highland for wounds to his liver, spleen, left kidney, abdomen and left arm.

Blackburn is listed in serious condition, but a surgeon said he is expected to recover fully.

A police guard was immediately stationed at Blackburn's hospital room. His home and the home of Mrs. Foster also are under police surveillance as a precaution against further attacks.

Foster and Blackburn were cut down at about 7 p.m. in a two-car parking lot reserved for them on the East 11th Street side of the administration building, whose address is 1025 Second Avenue. They were apparently by themselves and had gone to the lot shortly after a meeting of the board of education in the administration building had ended.

Blackburn's car, a 1971 white Chevrolet Vega, was the only one in the lot, and he was going to drive Foster home. School and police officials indicated. Police said Foster was standing on the passenger side of the car and Blackburn on the driver's side when they were shot.

Dr. William Teufel, Highland's associate chief of emergency services, said he saw



ROBERT W. BLACKBURN
Badly wounded

one gunshot wound over Foster's heart and another in his right side. A police source said Foster may have been shot more than twice, and that both he and Blackburn were apparently shot down at close range.

Police reported finding five shell casings from a 9 mm. or .380-caliber automatic handgun in the area near Foster's body.

Blackburn was hit perhaps

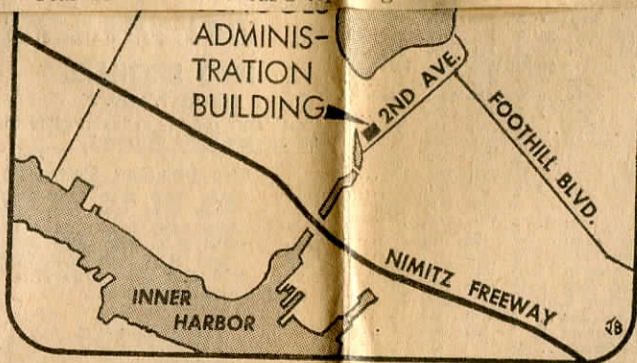
**Community shocked
by slaying, page 17.**

as many as 10 or 12 times with shotgun pellets, hospital personnel indicated. Teufel said a pellet of what looked like double-O buckshot rolled out of Blackburn's clothing. Police said three shell casings from shotgun ammunition were recovered from the area of the parking lot where Blackburn was standing.

A school employee said that, after the shooting, Blackburn managed to stagger into an entrance of the administration building and cried out, "and when I got there, he was lying on the floor" in the front lobby. Teufel said Blackburn "arrived talking" at Highland by ambulance.

Others at the meeting—board members and staff workers—left by rear and

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MAP LOCATES SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

Marcus Foster, Robert Blackburn were slain outside it

Two brown attache cases, presumably belonging to Foster and Blackburn, were on the parking lot pavement after the shootings—one behind the car on the passenger side

and the other across the lot just beyond the unoccupied space reserved for Foster. The one on the passenger side had a bullet hole in it, police said. Nothing had been taken

two men were ambushed. A police source indicated Blackburn helped provide descriptions of the assailants as well as an idea of the circumstances, but officers were being close-mouthed about most details. Three high school students taking a night class at nearby Laney College were reportedly less than a block from the parking lot when the shootings occurred and have apparently been questioned by police.

Charles Creely of 201 E. 12th St., near the parking lot, said "I counted seven shots," but declined to elaborate.

Officers said they are not familiar with white breast ties worn by the suspects having associated with any bar organization.

Wounded by Gunmen

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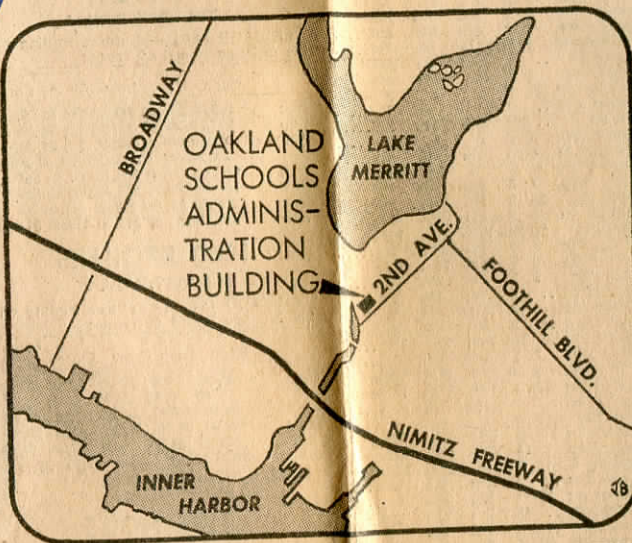
front doors, while Foster and Blackburn went out through a side door a few minutes after the others had departed.

Security guards patrol the building, but none was in the immediate vicinity when the two men were ambushed.

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from the cases or the victims, police said.

A light-colored Western-style hat with a big brim was on the top of a short stairway adjoining the lot and close to the street. It was not known if it was related to the case.

Deputy Police Chief Thomas Donohue called out a 10-man team of homicide officers to investigate the shootings. Heading the team are Sgts. Conrad Blevins and Lou Clark. Dozens of officers were called in last night to assist.

Foster's wife, Albertine, was at Highland with their daughter, Marsha, for about two hours before being whisked away. Blackburn's wife, Barbara, and their son Christopher, a student at Skyline High School, were not far from him much of the time he was in surgery. It is not known whether the Blackburns' daughter Samantha was also at the hospital.

Services for Dr. Foster are pending.

Chief Gain Threatened

By RICHARD PAOLI
Tribune Staff Writer

NOV - 8 1973

A letter from "The Sym-bionese Liberation Army Western Regional Youth Unit" claiming responsibility for the slaying of Oakland School Supt. Dr. Marcus Foster was found in the mail box of a Berkeley radio station

yesterday.

And at 8:45 p.m. yesterday deputy Alameda County coroner Joseph Blackwell received anon anonymous telephone call and a man's voice said "Chief Gain is next."

Police could not say whether the letter and the call are connected.

The letter, dated Nov. 6, was found by a KPFA station employe in the mailbox at the station's office, 2207 Shattuck Ave., around 11 a.m.

The letter claimed that Foster and his chief deputy superintendent, Robert Blackburn, who was seriously wounded in the attack Tuesday, had been marked for death "by a court of the people."

The three-page, typewritten and Xeroxed letter stated that Foster and Blackburn were to die for what it called support of "the youth and bio identification program" and alleged that Foster was guilty of what it called "crimes against children."

Oakland Police Chief Charles Gain said he did not take the telephoned threat seriously. "It's not the first time," Gain said.

Police, however, have provided security guards for offi-

**\$50,000 reward
offered, page 13**

cials of the Oakland school system since the shooting.

Dr. Foster and Blackburn were caught in a crossfire of shotgun and pistol shots as they entered a two-car parking space behind the school administration building at 1025 Second Ave. Three men jumped from the bushes firing as the two educators approached Blackburn's parked car.

Foster, hit several times in the chest, was killed.

Blackburn, bleeding from shotgun wounds in the abdomen, half staggered and half ran 200 feet to a door at the rear of the building to summon help.

Police have stated without reservation that the attack was "an assassination."

The two-car parking lot, located off East 11th Street at the rear of the building, is badly lit. The lot is clearly marked for the cars of the district superintendent and his deputy.

The three men waited in ambush, obviously knowing that Foster and Blackburn were in the administration building and would have to

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come to the lot when they left. Blackburn's car was in the lot. Blackburn had been giving Dr. Foster a ride home each evening for the past several weeks.

The three assailants then ran to a waiting car on East 10th Street. The car was described by police as a 1957 black Chevrolet with a spot of brown primer paint on the top. It was seen by witnesses heading west on East 10th.

Oakland police have issued an appeal for information about the shooting. Deputy Police Chief George Hart said a special 24-hour telephone number has been set up to take all calls.

Witnesses have provided police with varying descriptions of the three gunmen. Detectives are waiting to talk with Blackburn, recovering from surgery at Highland Hospital, to determine a precise description of the trio.

"We are making a very earnest appeal to anyone who has information regarding the shooting" to call the special police number, said Deputy Chief Hart yesterday.

The special telephone number is 273-3427.

An investigation team of more than 30 Oakland police detectives and Alameda County District Attorney's investigators have been working on the case, said Hart.

So far, the only information collected by police has come from the scene of the shooting.

At least two weapons, a **shotgun and an automatic pistol**, were used in the attack.

Robbery was apparently not the motive. The two attache cases, one belonging to Foster the other to Blackburn, were found unopened where they had fallen in the parking lot.

Foster and Blackburn left the building by a rear door about 7 p.m. and walked through the dark interior court to Blackburn's car.

The parking space, just off East 11th Street, "was a perfect place to set someone up," said police.

According to Dr. Alan McNie, county pathologist, Dr. Foster died as a result of "multiple gun shot wounds in the chest." Dr. McNie added that the autopsy studies were not yet complete.

Police ballistics experts have also not finished their studies of the bullets that struck Foster and Blackburn.

panel of the car, the other struck Blackburn.

Police say that then there were a "number of shots" fired from an as yet unidentified type of automatic pistol.

The gunmen fled, first on foot and then in the car that was seen heading west on East 10th Street, detectives said.

Blackburn is in "serious but stable condition" and under police security guard at Highland Hospital. He underwent emergency surgery Tuesday night for wounds to his liver, spleen, left kidney and left arm. Police said Blackburn appeared to have been wounded by one of two shotgun blasts fired as the two men neared Blackburn's parked car.

Foster walked alongside a wooden building in front of the car, going to passenger side, said police. Blackburn came around the right rear of car to unlock the passenger door for Foster.

Two shotgun blasts rang out, apparently fired from a clump of bushes at the northeast corner of the school district administration annex and about 20 feet from Blackburn.

Most of the pellets from one blast struck the right rear

\$40,000 in Rewards Offered in Shooting

Robert W. Blackburn

NOV - 8 1973

A total of \$40,000 in reward money has been offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the slayers of Oakland school superintendent Marcus A. Foster.

The figure includes \$25,000 offered by the Ford Foundation, \$10,000 by Gov. Ronald Reagan and \$5,000 which school board president Barney Hilburn cited as the figure that a man who called him said he was willing to donate.

Hilburn, disclosing the call at a board meeting last night, wouldn't identify the caller. He later told newsmen the caller requested anonymity.

Acting Supt. Alden W. Badal said the school district has been advised by the county counsel's office that it can't itself legally use any of its general purpose funds for reward money.

But he and board member David Tucker Jr. indicated that the district could administer reward donations from other sources.

Badal announced the Ford Foundation offer. Associate Supt. Andy Viscovich told newsmen the offer came in a call from Joshua White, a program officer for the foundation.

The Reagan offer marks the first time in recent history that a state reward has been offered for the killers of anyone other than a policeman.

Spokesman for Reagan said he acted immediately to make the reward available because Foster was "a noted and respected public official," because of the viciousness of the crime and because there were apparently few leads to his assailants.

Letter From 'Killers' of

Here is the text of the letter from the "Symbionese Liberation Army" which claims responsibility for the slaying of Oakland school superintendent Dr. Marcus A. Foster.

Dated Nov. 6, the letter was dropped in the mailbox of Berkeley radio station KPFA, 2207 Shattuck Ave., where it was found by a station employe Wednesday morning.

In the form of indictment, the letter names Foster and his chief deputy, Robert Blackburn, as marked for death because of their "supporting" a student identification program.

The letter's text:

On the afore stated date (Nov. 6), elements of the United Federated Forces of the SLA (the Symbionese Liberation Army) did attack the Fascist Board of Education, Oakland, California, through the persons of Dr. Marcus A. Foster, Superintendent of Schools, and Robert Blackburn, Deputy Superintendent.

This attack is to serve notice on the Board of Education and its fascist elements that they have come to the attention of The S.L.A. and the Court of the People and have been found guilty of supporting and taking part in crimes committed against the children and the life of the people.

This attack is also to serve notice on the fascist Board of Education and its fascist supporters that the Court of the People have issued a Death Warrant on All Members and Supporters of the internal Warfare Identification Computer System. This SHOOT ON SIGHT order will stay in effect until such time as ALL POLITICAL POLICE ARE REMOVED FROM OUR SCHOOLS AND ALL PHOT'W AND OTHER FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION ARE STOPPED.

Indictment:

No. 1: The Board of Education has taken upon itself the role of forming and supporting a Special Political Police Force to occupy and patrol the schools in our cities. The vast Black, Chicano, Asian and conscious White youth communities of the Oakland-Berkeley area understand that this newest extension of police surveillance is patterned after the fascist Amerikan (sic) tactics of genocide, murder and imprisonment practiced by American financed puppet governments in Vietnam, The Philippines, Chile and South Africa. We recognize that the school system censors and controls what we read, and that the Special Political Police Force is to censor and control what we say and do.

No. 2: The Board of Education has taken upon itself the role of forming and supporting the implementation of

Bio-Dossiers through the Forced Youth Identification Program. The Photo Identification Program, with the addition of composite files, is patterned after the system of apartheid in South Africa. The Bio-Dossiers classify our youth according to color and "criminal tendencies" (will to be free) and seek to eliminate all our valiant freedom fighters by "relocating" (incarcerating) them to such concentration camps as Tehachapi Prison. Under the Preventative Erime Act such concentration camps have the authority to incarcerate our youth from the age of 16 (??) for an "indefinite" period of time. The Preventative Crime Act stipulates that any youth displaying violent or "criminal" potential or the possibility of violent or "criminal" potential in the future, in other words, any youth who oppose the current system of censored Political Police-State education and seek to organize against it are to be classified as dangerous and either disarmed, shot or imprisoned for expressing their rights to be free, and defending the rights to freedom of their fellow brothers and sisters.

No. 3: The Board of Education has taken upon itself the role of supporting and taking part in the implementation of the Internal Warfare Identification Computer System. The Internal Warfare Tapes are based in the FBI's master

of Dr. Foster

computer system. Each state is required to feed this main computer system with information from the composite files of individuals who have expressed political views that may be regarded as differing from those of the fascist ruling class. Members of liberation movements and organizations, as well as single individuals, are identified through photographs and bio-dossiers supplied, in the case of our youth, by the Boards of Education and Public School Systems in our cities. The racist nature of the Internal Warfare Identification Computer System is clear since blacks and other minorities who refuse to serve the rich ruling class are automatically classified as potentially violent and "criminal." The CIA-ITT financed junta (sic) government in Chile uses similar bio-dossiers to murder all identified people who oppose the military take over there or who do not serve and support the interests of the wealthy. Similar programs are carried out by the governments financed by Amerika (sic) and its military corporate enterprises throughout the world in the lands of the robbed: Vietnam, The Philippines, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, South Africa are some prime examples.

The Black, Chicano, Asian and conscious White youth in our communities recognize the importance of the Oakland-Berkeley area to the liberation struggle of all oppressed people. We know that the ruling class must seek to stop the revolutionary community here before the ruling class can regain its arm of control around the struggling and oppressed people of the world.

We understand that the definition of a fascist government necessitates the elimination of all who oppose its controls. We know that the school system does not educate us, but rather it lies to us in an attempt to perpetuate the interests of the rich ruling class. News of the successful liberation struggles of our

brothers and sisters throughout the world is stifled because the enemy fears our knowledge of the fact that a truly determined people can never be defeated. We reject totally the ruling class values of personal material gain and competition among ourselves and we know that the enemy fears our understanding of the fact that nothing is more precious than freedom. The myth of a high-style superfly life and fashion show (a capitalist rip-off) does not sway us for we know that the fascist government of Amerika (sic) supplies the dope and the clothes and wants us to spend the rest of our lives paying for them. We are well aware that a fascist government will always allow some of us to get high, while the rest of us go to concentration camps, and none of us are free.

It is clear that Dr. Foster and sideman, deputy superintendent Robert Blackburn represent the rich ruling class and big business, and not the children and youth of our communities. The school system which they represent and serve does not teach us or address itself to the needs of our survival, but rather it does perpetuate the values of big business and the wealthy. Under the current system, the ruling class is educated to exploit, and our children and youth are educated to serve. We are not deceived by the superintendent and the deputy. Robert Blackburn is a former director of education for the Peace Corps in East Africa. The Peace Corps, as well as AID (Agency for International Development), are promoted and financed as a front for the CIA, and have long been arms of Amerikan (sic) imperialist and racist oppression and genocide. Dr. Foster is a former member of the Philadelphia Crime Commission and now his advancement within the fascist process found him as initiator, promoter and supporter of Political Police Units, armed with riot shotguns, to patrol our schools.

Oakland Tribune

A RESPONSIBLE METROPOLITAN NEWSPAPER

Fri., Nov. 9, 1973 19

The Oakland-Berkeley area is considered potentially dangerous to the Amerikan (sic) ruling class, that is why it has been selected for the Political Police Police Force Within the Schools and Forced Youth Identification Program. Let it be known to those who sign for the implementation of these fascist programs, that the death of our manchild comrade youth, 14-year-old Tyrone Guyton, murdered on November 1st by three goons from the Emeryville Political Police Patrol, is NOT FORGOTTEN. Tyrone fell victim to the racist enemy who is instituting programs such as those initiated by Marcus Foster and Robert Blackburn aimed at the control, imprisonment, execution and genocide of blacks and other minorities. Let it be known to those who sign for the implementation of these fascist programs, that they sign their own death warrants. We of the black and other revolutionary youth communities have for too long seen the enemy prostitute our mothers, imprison our fathers, shoot our brothers and sterilize our sisters. We have learned from these lessons; therefore, notice is hereby served on the enemy political police state and all its lackeys that we hold as an example to follow the courage of our slain comrade-in-arms Johnathan Jackson and we call upon our mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers saying TO THOSE WHO WOULD BEAR THE HOPES AND FUTURE OF OUR PEOPLE, LET THE VOICE OF THEIR GUNS EXPRESS THE WORDS OF FREEDOM.

DEATH TO THE FASCIST INSECT
THAT PREYS UPON THE LIFE
OF THE PEOPLE

Tapes Sifted for Foster Case Clue

NOV 10 1973

In their search for a motive to the slaying of School Supt. Marcus Foster, Oakland detectives yesterday began sifting the minutes and tape recordings of meetings of the board of education.

Police are apparently hoping that statements made by the public the "why" in the ambush Blackburn of Foster and Deputy Supt. Robert at the rear of the school district headquarters, 1025 Second Ave.

Rewards totaling \$20,000, \$10,000 posted by the Oakland city council from city funds and an equal amount authorized by Gov. Ronald Reagan, have been posted for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the slayers.

Police are now searching for at least three suspects.

Police Chief George Hart said all possible sources were being examined in the search for a motive. "This is a key part of the investigation," Hart said.

The new chief also said "numerous" live .45-caliber bullets were found scattered along a path in Peralta Park, the escape route of the gunmen. The park is located behind the school administration building.

"The shells were scattered as though they'd fallen from the pocket of someone who was running," Hart noted.

The bullets that killed Foster came from a .380-caliber automatic pistol.

He also said that minutes before the shooting a member of the board of education walked into the darkened two-car parking area and drove away in his car — parked in the slot reserved for Dr. Foster.

Board member Mel Caughell confirmed that he had parked in Foster's space but didn't see anything unusual when he drove off.

However, based on repeated interviews with several members of the school district staff, police have been able to piece together a composite description of two gunmen. The witnesses, said Hart, left the building between 6:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. by the same rear door used by Foster and Blackburn.

In a dimly-lit corridor between the rear of the building and a temporary wooden structure, witnesses saw two individuals now described by police as: Dark shoulder length hair, 15 to 20 years of

Tribute Time Changed

A citywide tribute for slain Oakland Schools Supt. Dr. Marcus Foster will be held at 7 p.m. Monday instead of 6:30 p.m. as originally planned, it was announced at last night's school board meeting.

Residents of the entire Bay Area are welcome to attend the memorial, to be held at the Oakland Coliseum Arena, according to Acting Supt. Dr. Alden W. Badal. There will be no charge for parking in the Coliseum lot.

A delegation from Philadel-

phia is expected, as well as persons from other parts of the nation, Dr. Badal said.

He also described as erroneous an announcement he made Wednesday night that the Ford Foundation offered a \$25,000 reward.

The board met briefly in public session last night, then held an executive session behind closed doors for about an hour on undisclosed topics before emerging to adjourn. It will meet again at 8 a.m. Monday at 1025 Second Ave.

age, medium height (five-foot-six to five-foot-eight), and slender build (110 to 120 pounds).

"The complexion of the two individuals," said Chief Hart, "has been variously described as olive or tan.

"And because of the variance of the descriptions," he added, "one or both might have been female."

About the only thing that the witnesses agree on, Chief Hart added, was the clothing worn by the two suspects.

"They agree that the two individuals were wearing dark blue knit watchcaps-denim jackets with a white patch over the right breast pocket and dark pants.

Foster and Blackburn, as they were leaving the building, passed in front of the two suspects.

As the two men entered the two-car parking space, shots rang out and Foster, hit seven times in the back and once in the abdomen, fell to the rain-soaked pavement. Almost simultaneously, two shotgun blasts were fired at Blackburn, who was standing at the other end of his car. One load of 00 buckshot hit Blackburn in the abdomen, the second hit the right side of the car.

Police said it was a 12-gauge shotgun.

The shotgun was fired, according to police, from a clump of bushes at the corner of the administration annex, a three-story wooden building alongside the parking area.

The shots fired into Foster, said Chief Hart, "were fired from behind him. This leads us to believe that they were fired by the two individuals seen in the alleyway."

The three suspects fled on foot west on East 11th Street and into Peralta Park one block away. Their trail ends there, said Hart.

Blackburn is reported still in serious condition and under police security guard at Highland Hospital. Doctors say he will fully recover from the wounds.

Chief Hart said as soon as doctors will permit it, detectives will interview Blackburn in an attempt to obtain a better description of the suspects.

Funeral services for Dr. Foster will be held at 11 a.m. Monday day at the Beebe Memorial CME Temple, 3900 Telegraph Ave. The services are being arranged by the Jackson Funeral Home, 8901 E 14th St.

Blackburn Offers Thanks

NOV 15 1973

Robert Blackburn, Oakland school superintendent severely wounded in the shooting which took the life of Supt. Marcus Foster, has said he could not add to the information of Oakland Police investigators when they reviewed their preliminary work with him.

In a statement prepared by

Blackburn at Highland Hospital and made public at yesterday's board of education meeting, he said he wished to "express my warmest thanks to those hundreds of people who have communicated their support to me. Each message has been important and sustaining."

He expressed confidence the

ability of police "to carry out their work to a successful conclusion."

Many had asked him what they could do to be of assistance during the weeks ahead, Blackburn said. "I would suggest the following:

"Give the board and the staff of the Oakland schools time and leeway to make fu-

ture plans. More than ever in the history of Oakland, school leaders need understanding, compassion and a chance to thoughtfully chart our future course.

"The investigative process will be best served by discussions and media treatments free from speculation, hearsay and premature judgments.

"Marc Foster's life had meaning for each of us. For myself, I know what I must do over the coming months and years to help bring his vision to reality. I think the same is true for every student, teacher and resident of Oakland. It is not that we need to somehow become better people because of Marc's dream and challenge, rather it is our duty to do what we can to improve the quality of life for our children, for ourselves and for our community."

2nd Letter From Symbionese Unit

This the the text of the second letter received by The Tribune from the "Symbionese Liberation Army."

As in the first letter, mention is made of Tyrone Guyton, 14, of Oakland, who was shot to death following a car and foot chase by Emeryville policemen Nov. 1.

SYMBIONESE LIBERATION ARMY WESTERN REGIONAL YOUTH UNIT

Communique No. 2

Subject:

The Board of Education
The Respecting of the
Rights
and Wishes of the People

Notification:

Court Order

Date: Nov. 15, 1973

Order Issued By:

The Court of the People

It has come to the attention of the Symbionese Liberation Army and the Court of the People that the fascist Board of Education has made an attempt to heed and respect the rights and wishes of the people by stating that they will not continue to take part in crimes committed against the children and the life of the people. Therefore, it is the decision of this court that the SHOOT ON SIGHT warrant issued Nov. 6, 1973, be rescinded, and that all forces of the S.L.A. and the People's Army halt their attack on this aspect of the fascist enemy state. However, in the event that the fascist Board of Education does attempt to disguise their intentions and at any time reinstates programs of Political Police Forces in our schools, Forced Youth Identification Cards, and contributions to the Internal Warfare Identification Computer System, then the Death Warrant Order is to be immediately reactivated without warning.

The forces of The Symbionese Liberation Army commend the people for their courage in refusing to fall prey to offers of bribery and rewards to be given for information which the enemy will then use against the defenders of the people. We praise the

spirit, determination and strength of the vast Black, Chicano, Asian and conscious white communities of the Oakland-Berkeley area, and remind the enemy rich ruling class that the people will always understand the effectiveness and tactics of revolutionary justice, and will never be deceived by the distortions and lies of the fascist news media. Marcus Foster has been likened to one of our slain leaders. We ask, who has ever heard of a Martin Luther King on the Philadelphia Crime Commission? Who has ever heard of a Martin Luther King having an aide who is a CIA agent, formerly acting as director of education for the Peace Corps in East Africa? We are well aware that the fascist news media seeks to condition us by repressing the truth.

The people have seen no evidence to indicate that Deputy Superintendent Blackburn is in fact still alive. Traditionally (sic), the fascist news media is quick to display photographs of members of the enemy state who have managed to survive revolutionary justice and the will of the people. Usually we would see the enemy as he lays in his plush, private hospital room, while the wounds of the oppressed people remain unattended. However, if Blackburn is alive, The Symbionese Liberation Army and The Court of the People wish to point out the contradiction between the medical care received by those who represent the rich ruling class, and that received by members of the poor and oppressed communities. It is obvious that medical technology does exist and that it is a question of who receives the benefits of such care. Tyrone Guyton was shot down, handcuffed, and allowed to bleed to death in the gutter. For too long we have seen our people die from the enemy's bullets.

"DEATH TO THE FASCIST
INSECT
THAT PREYS UPON THE
LIFE
OF THE PEOPLE."

Foster Slayers Still Elud

JAN 6 1974

By RICHARD PAOLI
Tribune Staff Writer

Despite the intense investigation since the ambush-assassination of Oakland Schools Supt. Dr. Marcus Foster two months ago, police today still do not know who killed him.

A team of Oakland detectives, Alameda County district attorney's investigators and FBI agents continue their examination of the scanty evidence. New information, some from the public, is tracked down each day. All of it has so far led to dead ends.

The latest bit of information, identification of the type of cyanide found on the 38-caliber bullets that tore life from Dr. Foster, has also failed to lead anywhere.

"It's a garden variety type of cyanide," Homicide Sgt. John Agler, who heads the Foster investigation, told The Tribune. "It is fairly easy to obtain—you can buy the stuff in a gardening store."

Identification of the cyanide was made by a Berkeley laboratory from particles found on the bullets.

According to Agler, the samples turned out to be potassium cyanide, "so common that it is untraceable" to a specific manufacturer or retailer. Agler's team of detectives also checked with the Oakland School District and the Peralta College District to determine whether the cyanide might have been taken from a lab classroom.

"All their stocks are accounted for," Agler noted.

The schools' supplies were checked because, based on witnesses' descriptions, two of Dr. Foster's slayers might be teenagers and possibly students in a local high school or junior college.

The description, like the physical evidence, is vague.

"The two suspects," said Agler, "could be teenagers, young adults or adults with slight, short builds. They could be light-skinned blacks or caucasians."

Dr. Foster and his chief

assistant, Deputy Supt. Robert Blackburn, walked out of the Oakland District headquarters about 7 p.m. last Nov. 6. They left through a rear door, walked down a flight of steps, along an alleyway at the rear of the building and into a dimly lighted two-car parking lot.

Witnesses who left the building moments before Foster and Blackburn told detectives they saw two figures standing in the alleyway through which Foster and his assistant passed. The descriptions of the two suspects are so general "that one or both of them could be female," notes Agler.

As they entered the parking lot, Foster walked to the front of Blackburn's sedan, the only car in the lot. Blackburn, for at least two months prior to the Nov. 6, had given Foster a ride home each evening. Blackburn walked around to the passenger side of the car to unlock the door for Foster.

A volley of pistol and shotgun fire roared out. Foster, struck in the back by eight 38-caliber automatic pistol bullets, lay dying. Blackburn, bleeding from a shotgun wound in the abdomen, half ran half staggered out of the parking lot, calling for help.

Blackburn is still recovering from his wounds.

Less than 17 hours after the shots were fired, Berkeley radio station KPFA found a letter in its mailbox from "The Symbionese Liberation Army," claiming that Foster and Blackburn had been marked for "execution by cyanide bullets."

The letter was a photo-copy. The next day, a similar letter was received at the San Francisco Chronicle, and three days after the shooting, one was received at The Tribune.

A week later, a second letter, also photo-copied like the first three, was received at The Tribune.

In the first letters, the Symbionese Army claimed that Foster's and Blackburn's support of a "bio-identification



HOMICIDE LT. WALLER PRENTICE (LEFT) REVIEW
Sgts. John Agler (center) and Garry Furry head two-

card" program and a police-on-campus proposal for Oakland schools as the reason the two men had been marked for assassination. The letter also warned other Oakland school officials and members of the board of education that they too would be "executed" unless the identification card and police programs were canceled.

The board of education canceled the programs Shortly after board members acted, the second letter was mailed. It noted the board's action and said the execution orders against the board and other school officials had been withdrawn.

The letters have been turned over to the FBI crime

lab in Washington, D.C. Sgt. Agler said the FBI has not completed its examination of the letters and envelopes.

As part of the FBI examination, Agler said, specialists in revolutionary rhetoric, militant movements and psychologists have also reviewed the text of the letters.

Local and federal intelligence files have no record of the Symbionese Army, said Agler.

Although the letters, if valid, give a motive for the slaying, detectives have also investigated other possible motives.

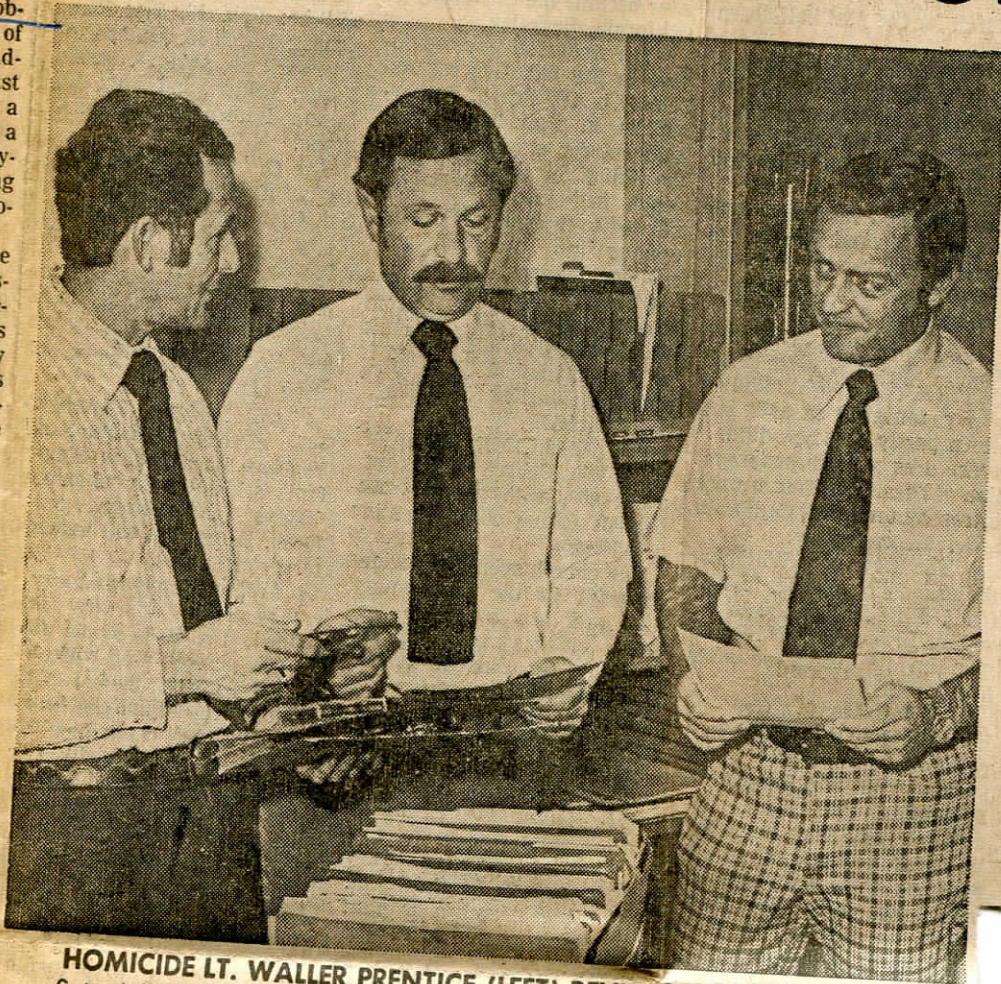
Could Foster have been killed because the proposed increase of police around the campuses would have affected

Slayers Still Elude Police

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HOMICIDE LT. WALLER PRENTICE (LEFT) REVIEWS FOSTER EVIDENCE
Sgts. John Agler (center) and Garry Furry head two-month-old investigation

Blackburn and his other associates," said Agler. "It just wasn't true."

Could some group have come to Oakland, studied Foster's movements, drawn up a plan, ambushed the two men and then left California or the United States?

"It is possible. A lot of these things are possible and we have and will continue to investigate all of them," said Agler.

He also pointed out that "there hasn't been a whisper" about the Foster slaying from police informants in Oakland's criminal community.

There is now a total of \$30,000 in reward money offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the slayers of Foster. The Tribune, the Oakland city council and Gov. Ronald Reagan, from a special state City Council fund, have each contributed \$10,000.

Anyone with information is urged to telephone the Oakland police department, 273-3427, or The Tribune, 645-2651.

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Could Foster have been killed because the proposed increase of police around the campuses would have affected

drug traffic? Agler said the possibility led to a dead end. And officers in the Oakland juvenile division noted that there has been a slight decline in drug related incidents in the Oakland schools during the past year.

Following the shooting, Agler and other detectives sifted through minutes and tape recordings of school board meetings to see if any threats might have been made against Foster. After tracking down dozens of leads, another dead end.

It was also rumored, several days after Foster's death, that the superintendent had been threatened just two days prior to the shooting. "We checked with his wife, with

Suspect G Murder o

JAN 11 1974

By RICHARD PAOLI and
HARRY HARRIS
Tribune Staff Writers

A German-made gun taken from a suspected member of the Symbionese Liberation Army in Concord early yesterday was the weapon used to kill Oakland schools Supt. Marcus A. Foster, a police ballistics test shows.

The suspect, Joseph Michael Remiro, was charged today with murder and attempted murder for the death of Dr. Foster and wounding of Dr. Robert Blackburn in the ambush Nov. 6.

An affidavit filed in Oakland-Piedmont Municipal Court today carried data on

without bail on his own recognition, saying that his home and his ex-wife are in the Bay Area so "there is no reason for him to leave." Hatzenbuehler turned down her request.

Bain complained that Little is forced to sleep in shackles under a bright light in his cell. He asked the judge to order medical attention for Little's glaucoma, but Hatzenbuehler said he has no jurisdiction in such matters and the appeal should go through Superior Court.

Little and Remiro both

the death weapon and asked for a murder warrant against Remiro.

Remiro was arrested after an exchange of gunfire with a Concord police officer who stopped a van containing Remiro and another man early yesterday.

Inside the van was the gun—a .380 caliber Walther automatic—that police claim was used to kill Foster and literature of the mysterious Symbionese Army.

The affidavit alleged that "ballistics comparisons were made by John Davis, chief criminalist of the Oakland Police Department...and in the opinion of Mr. Davis...is the gun that fired the bullets that killed Dr. Marcus Foster..."

Hours after Remiro's arrest, a house that authorities say is the headquarters of the Symbionese Army was partially burned in an arson fire, apparently in a clumsy attempt to destroy evidence.

The house fire was set shortly before 6 p. m. in a three-bedroom house at 1560 Sutherland Court just outside the Concord city limits.

Firemen answering the call acted so swiftly the blaze was quenched within four minutes and most of the the structure and evidence inside was saved.

The first startling discovery the firemen made was of a cache of weapons. They called police.

A high police official said that the house is believed to be the headquarters of the mysterious S.L.A.

Authorities did not want to say in detail what items they found in the house, but The Tribune learned that the haul included the weapons cache, a variety of explosives and the original of the first Symbionese letter which claimed responsibility for the Foster slaying Nov. 6.

The house also held the printing press authorities believe was used to make copies of the S.L.A. letters and the typewriter to write the letters originally.

"We have strong reason to believe that the occupants of this house were in some way connected with the murder of Dr. Foster," Capt. John Lathrop, chief of the Oakland police criminal investigation division, said last night as homicide detectives sifted through charred debris.

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A letter headed "Communique No. 3," one which had not yet been mailed, was also found among the effects.

Inspectors from the Central **Contra Costa Consolidated** Fire District said "there is no question—the fire was deliberately set."

Events resulting in the break in the murder investigation began at 1:30 a. m. yesterday when Concord Police Sgt. Dave Duge stopped a cruising van just two blocks, as it turned out, from the scene of the burned house, and routinely asked for identification.

The driver and his passenger handed over their licenses and Duge walked to his patrol car to make a radio check of the names.

As he started back to the van, Duge said, one of the men fired a shot at him. He fired back, hitting and slightly wounding one man. The other ran, but was soon captured.

In the van, police found literature from the Sym-bionese Army and "several weapons." One gun is a .38 caliber pistol similar to that used in the assassination of Foster.

He was shot in a parking lot of the school district headquarters and riddled with cyanide-laced bullets.

The Oakland police crime

Continued Back Page, Col. 1

Continued from Page 1

lab made initial ballistics tests of the pistol from the van, but results have not been revealed.

Meanwhile, police began to unravel the identity of the two men.

The wounded man first gave his name as Robert James Scalise, 27, and told police his address was 1621 Seventh St., Oakland.

The address turned out to be a parking lot. And the court today carried data on

name, an alias, belonged to an Oakland youngster who died of leukemia in 1953 when he was six years old.

Checking Alameda County records the Tribune discovered that the man's real name is Russell Jack Little, 24, whose last known Oakland address was 5939 Chabot Road.

The other man was identified as Joseph M. Remiro, 27, of 1476 Seventh Ave., San Francisco. Remiro, according to county voting records, was an Oakland resident in March

gun that fired the bullets that killed Dr. Marcus Foster...

linked to Foster

last year. He gave 4616 Bond St. as his address when he registered to vote.

The Tribune also learned that Remiro bought a German-made .380 Walther automatic pistol on July 19, 1973, from an Eastbay gunshop. At the time, he gave his occupation as mechanic and his home address as 1476 Seventh Ave., San Francisco. Police investigation showed that is the address of Remiro's parents, and determined they have no connection with the

recent events.

The senior Remiros told officers their son had not lived there for some time.

The .380 Walther is the type of weapon used to kill Foster, officials said. Ballistics tests are being run on the weapon.

Detectives, armed with warrants, have searched both Oakland addresses and carried away boxes of evidence. None of the present residents were detained, however.

Little and Remiro, each held on \$250,000 bail, ap-

peared in Martinez Municipal Court today and pleaded innocent to charges of attempted murder and assault with a deadly weapon on a peace officer.

Little, represented by Deputy Public Defender John Bain, arrived in stocking feet. His shoes being held as evidence.

Judge John Hatzenbuehler agreed with Bain that it was improper to withhold shoes from the defendant and ordered that he not be brought to court unshod again. Jailers assured the court shoes were being found for him.

Robin Yeamans, representing Remiro, complained bit-

assured the court shoes were being found for him.

Robin Yeamans, representing Remiro, complained bitterly at being searched before entering the courtroom.

"I feel that having a matron stick her fingers in my hair is offensive to my dignity," the Redwood City attorney said.

Everyone who entered the heavily guarded room was searched.

Miss Yeamans also made a bid to have Remiro freed without bail on his own recognizance, saying that his home and his ex-wife are in the Bay Area so "there is no reason for him to leave." Hatzenbuehler turned down her request.

Bain complained that Little is forced to sleep in shackles under a bright light in his cell. He asked the judge to order medical attention for Little's glaucoma, but Hatzenbuehler said he has no jurisdiction in such matters and the appeal should go through Superior Court.

Little and Remiro, both slight of build, postured and grinned during the hearing. They made no attempt to disrupt the proceedings.

Their arraignment was set for 10 a.m. Jan. 25.

Bail was set at \$250,000 each.

When they were transferred to the now heavily guarded Contra Costa County jail in Martinez, they were booked also for investigation of murder at the request of Oakland police.

Neighbors on Sutherland Court said at least three people had been living in the house during the past several weeks. One neighbor said one of the residents was Little and that a woman and two other men also stayed there.

In a terse statement late yesterday, Oakland Police Chief George Hart said that "further search warrants" would be sought. "We will be unable to make any further comment pending the completion of this investigation," Hart added.

During the spring of 1973 Remiro and Little attended classes at different campuses of the Peralta College District. Remiro was enrolled at the North Peralta campus and Little attended College of Alameda.

Both gave the Oakland ad-

"shoot-on-sight" school officials and board members.

Actually, the board did not cancel the programs. After Dr. Foster withdrew them from the Oct. 9 agenda, the board never formally discussed the proposals.

All copies of the letters were sent to the FBI crime lab in Washington, D.C., for examination. The results of the examination should reveal the make and model of the typewriter used to write the letters.

Among the evidence removed from the Sutherland Court house was a typewriter. Typewriters were also taken as evidence from the two homes searched in Oakland.

tion of this investigation," Hart added. ,

During the spring of 1973 Remiro and Little attended classes at different campuses of the Peralta College District. Remiro was enrolled at the North Peralta campus and Little attended College of Alameda.

Both gave the Oakland addresses searched yesterday by police when they enrolled.

In a related incident, about which Oakland police spokesmen have declined to comment, patrol units stopped a 1965 station wagon in the 2500 block of Coolidge Avenue yesterday at 3:30 p.m. The Tribune later learned that police found "a number of firearms" in the vehicle and detained the driver, identified as a female Oriental, for questioning. Authorities would only admit that the car was related to the Foster investigation. It was learned that the FBI, which has been assisting Oakland homicide detectives, had followed the station wagon for several miles before Oakland patrol cars moved in to make the stop.

Police refused to answer questions about whether the driver was being detained.

Foster was killed by a hail of cyanide-packed bullets as he walked into a dimly lit parking lot at the rear of the school district headquarters, 1025 Second St. Deputy Supt. Robert Blackburn, who was accompanying Foster, was seriously wounded by a shotgun blast fired from the opposite end of the parking lot.

The day after the shooting, a letter from the Symbionese Liberation Army was received at Berkeley radio station KPFA. Like the other Symbionese letters that would follow, the first one was a photocopy of an original. Copies of this letter were also received by the San Francisco Chronicle and The Tribune.

The letter stated that Foster and Blackburn were targeted for "execution with cyanide bullets" because of the alleged support of "police-on-campus" and "bio-identification card" programs in Oakland high schools.

Foster, on Oct. 9, 1973, had withdrawn the programs from the board agenda claiming he was not satisfied with some of the sections of it.

A second Symbionese letter was received by The Tribune on Nov. 17. The letter said that because the board of education had canceled the programs, the Symbionese Army was withdrawing its order to

Wounded Aide Named Acting Chief

JAN 16 1974
By ANDY JOKELSON
Tribune Staff Writer

Robert W. Blackburn, who was seriously wounded when Oakland schools superintendent Marcus A. Foster was slain, is the district's new acting superintendent.

"I'm very near full capability and energy," Blackburn said.

Blackburn, who was Foster's deputy, was named acting superintendent last night by the board of education in an emotional closing of the meeting. He said he wouldn't be a candidate for permanent superintendent and wouldn't take the job if it was offered.

He succeeds Alden W. Badal, who stepped into the position at the board's request Nov. 6, the night Foster was assassinated and Blackburn was wounded outside the schools' administration building, 1025 Second Ave. The board last night named Badal acting deputy superintendent.

Yesterday was Blackburn's first day back at work. Board members lavished praise on Badal for the job he has done as acting superintendent.

Board member David S. Tucker Jr. disclosed that Badal had been offered the opportunity of continuing as acting superintendent even after Blackburn returned to work, but that Badal turned it down. Tucker said the offer was made because of the outstanding job he had done.

Badal confirmed the offer and his rejection, telling newsmen he declined for "personal reasons" and so he could concentrate on his areas

**Hours won't be
changed, page 13**

of interest and experience, including the district's building of program and development of management systems. Before becoming acting superintendent, Badal was the district's associate superintendent for planning, research and evaluation.

He said salary was not a factor in his decision. Blackburn will be paid \$40,000 a year as acting superintendent and Badal \$33,000 as his deputy. The board voted to pay Badal a \$40,000 salary for his tenure as acting superintendent.

ent.

Tucker said the board's most important job now is to find and select a superintendent before the start of the next school year. He said his impression is that the board will go through exactly the same steps as it did when Foster was hired in 1970.

He said a meeting is planned soon between the board and Harry McPherson, of the University of California, Berkeley, who helped direct the board's recruitment and screening that resulted in Foster's appointment.

Blackburn, who turned 39 on Monday, said that Foster had been in tremendous demand for jobs elsewhere, but never wavered in his interest in and loyalty to Oakland as a community, and "neither have I." But he said the job of permanent superintendent is "not an assignment that I would seek in terms of my own areas of interest."

He said that supporting a superintendent in initiating new programs and getting things done "are the areas of activities that I feel most comfortable in."

He indicated he'd remain as deputy superintendent under a new superintendent if arrangements are reasonable and that, in the aftermath of his wounding, he "never felt anything but that I would stay on in Oakland."

Blackburn's voice seemed a bit thinner than before he was shot, but otherwise he appeared in good health.

He said his doctors said he's ready to return to work, but that he should "be a little reasonable at the beginning" on the extent of his working hours. He said the doctors believe he should have no

Continued Back Page, Col. 3

Top Spot

Continued from Page 1

permanent injuries or physical problems.

Blackburn appeared at ease, had his familiar curved-stem pipe with him and tossed off quips in his remarks during the board meeting and afterward.

Blackburn, who has been described by many as Foster's alter-ego, declined to discuss specifics of the shootings or the subsequent investigation which only in the last week has produced major breakthroughs.

He did say, however, that he believed the Oakland police had done outstanding work in assembling all available facts, analyzing and researching "every shred of evidence that they've been able to assemble," and following up opportunities presented in the last four to five days. He said he's been very impressed with the professionalism of police officers' work on the case.

Blackburn also said "I'm very grateful for the attention and concern that the media has generally reflected" in connection with the case.

The board had held nearly a two-hour public session without Blackburn in attendance before recessing for a short closed session. But when it returned, he was with them and he was greeted by several well-wishers as he made his way to the board room's stage where the board and top staff members sit.

Then in rapid-fire succession, the board named him as acting superintendent, Badal as acting deputy superintendent and John Hills as acting associate superintendent for management systems, all on unanimous votes.

Board president Barney Hilburn then began a round of individual board member tributes to Badal and welcome-back greetings to Blackburn, thanking Badal for "the excellent work you have done and how gracious you were to come to our rescue that fateful night."

The board unanimously approved a resolution paying tribute to Badal for his service as acting superintendent.

Plans for Foster Institute

FEB 21 1974

By DORIS G. WORSHAM
Tribune Staff Writer

Plans for the creation of the Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute, a tax exempt organization that would provide revenues for student-oriented programs, was revealed yesterday by Oakland schools and city officials.

"One of the dreams of Marcus Foster was to create a permanent on-going organization that would operate like a foundation to meet the needs of Oakland school children," said Robert Blackburn, acting superintendent of the Oakland public schools. "We plan to collect individual donations and corporate gifts and the like to create activities that would provide innovative curriculums, scholarships and athletic programs for the students of Oakland."

An inaugural dinner launching the Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute will be held on March 31 at Goodman Hall in Jack London Square at 7 p.m. on the late superintendent's birthday.

Co-chairmen of the dinner event are Leo K. Sorensen, assistant to the general manager of the Pacific Telephone Company; Frank H. Ogawa, Oakland City Councilman; John B. Williams, executive director, Oakland Redevelopment Agency. Committee members for the event are Oakland Mayor John H. Reading; Barney E. Hilburn, president of the Oakland Board of Education; Laurence D. Bolling, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission and Blackburn. Bolling and William F. Knowland, publisher and editor of the Tribune, will serve as co-chairmen of the Educational Institute.

Shortly before his death, Dr. Foster had created the Oakland Educational Institute that would be a repository for donations and grants. The funds would not only be used for scholarships, but also for curricular innovations, athletic, music and art programs and other areas in which state and federal funds are not



Tribune Photo by BILL CROUCH

REDEVELOPMENT'S JOHN WILLIAMS, LEFT, MAYOR READING HEAR PLAN

Acting Superintendent Robert Blackburn outlines Marcus Foster Institute proposal

readily available.

The institute has been renamed in his honor and his widow, Mrs. Albertine R. Foster, will help with the inaugural event in March.

Arrangements for the dinner event will be coordinated by volunteers working from an office located at 1419 Broadway, Room 800. Reservations for the inaugural dinner are \$25 each and proceeds will benefit the institute.

Names of honorary chairmen, committee chairmen and the keynote speaker will be announced at a later date.

"This is the only major urban school district to have this type of program supported by its own school system and it will encompass corporate leaders, educators, professionals and young people," Blackburn said.

"We want to keep his ideas alive so that teachers, parents and students will know that some money is available to

improve education in Oakland," he added.

"The institute, Blackburn continued, "is one of the top priorities in the school system and we want to initiate a systematic fundraising activity. The institute funds are entirely separate from normal funds in the district. We now have some \$24,000 just for scholarships and other money for curriculum. Long range goals have not yet been established. We are just now in the planning stages."

Hilburn said that Dr. Foster "had a special relationship with the board of education. He was rather close and they are dedicated to carrying out his dreams. We are dedicated to carrying them out to fulfillment," he said.

"We're working on Marcus Foster's theme—unity," said Bolling. "If we all have unity, there is no limit as to what we can do as a people."

Sorenson added, "This is

for the children. The young high school children that cleaned up the office space for us contributed to the Marcus Foster legend by not accepting the \$3 an hour they worked for," he said.

According to Hilburn, most of the fundraising activities will be devoted to the Oakland area, "but Philadelphia is most interested," he said.

2 Radio Men Mum in Court

MAR 27 1974

By LLOYD BOLES
Tribune Staff Writer

The news director and the station manager of Berkeley FM radio station KPFA, claiming privilege as news reporters, refused to testify before an Alameda County Grand Jury probe into the murder of Dr. Marcus Foster yesterday.

Dist. Atty. Lowell Jensen, who is presenting some 50 witnesses to the grand jury in an effort to obtain a murder indictment against Russell Jack Little and Joseph Remiro for the Foster killing and the attempted murder of his aide, Robert Blackburn, declined comment on the appearance of Paul Fischer, the station's news director, and Roger Pritchard, its manager.

Berkeley attorney Peter Franck, who accompanied the men to the grand jury hearing, told The Tribune, however, he advised them against testifying although they were under a grand jury subpoena.

Franck said Fischer appeared briefly before the jury and read a prepared statement in which he cited First Amendment rights and also Section 1070 of the California Evidence Code, which protects a reporter from a contempt citation for refusal to disclose a news source.

Franck said that the statement Fischer read declared, among other things, that

"newsmen shouldn't be required to testify behind closed doors...the news media should be free from grand jury procedures...requiring newsmen to testify before administrative bodies would have a chilling effect on news sources."

Fischer was asked a few questions by Jensen and then was dismissed, said Franck. Pritchard then took the stand and announced the same position on the same grounds. Both appearances before the jury took about 10 minutes.

Section 1070 of the Evidence Code, as it pertains to radio personnel, says: "Nor can a radio or television news reporter or other person connected with or employed by a radio or television station be so adjudged in contempt for refusing to disclose the source of any information procured for and used for news or news commentary purposes on radio or television."

Station KPFA received "Communique No. One" from the Symbionese Liberation Army in the forenoon hours of Nov. 7. The communique, one of three received by the news media, claimed responsibility for the assassination of Dr. Foster, Oakland school superintendent, who was cut down with a hail of cyanide slugs as he and Blackburn left a school meeting the evening before.

The San Francisco Chronicle received a copy of the

communique and one of its assistant city editors, it was learned, did give testimony before the grand jury yesterday.

The original of the communique was found in a burning Concord home, described by authorities as the SLA headquarters. Investigators earlier disclosed that Little, 24, and Remiro, 27, had lived at the Concord home.

Little and Remiro were arrested Jan. 10 in a van near the Concord home following a shootout with a police officer. They are charged in Contra Costa County with the attempted murder of the police officer and in Alameda County with Foster's murder.

Alameda County District Attorney's Office officials declined yesterday to comment on the testimony of other witnesses before the jury. Thus far, it was learned, nearly a score of witnesses testified yesterday and the hearing will run through tomorrow with an additional 25 or 30 witnesses under subpoena to testify.

One of the witnesses, it was learned, was Dr. Allan McNie, Alameda County pathologist who conducted the autopsy on

Foster's body. He told jurors, if he followed his protocol, which is public record, that Foster was hit by a fusillade of eight slugs—all packing lethal doses of cyanide in hollowed out .38-caliber bullets.

Dr. McNie's protocol shows that Foster was shot five times in the back, twice in the lower abdomen and once in his right leg. One of the slugs that pierced his back was found by Dr. McNie in Foster's shirt pocket. "It smelled strongly of cyanide," he said.

Several Oakland Police Department technicians also testified. They said they found a variety of physical evidence at the murder scene, the rear of the school administration building at 1025 Second Ave.

Among the evidence they retrieved were two expended 12 gauge shotgun casings. Blackburn, now acting superintendent of schools, was hit in the chest with a full blast of 00 buckshot fired from a 12 gauge shotgun.

Officers also found a dozen or so live rounds of .45-caliber ammunition strewn along the pathway leading from East 11th Street to the parking lot where the shooting occurred.

Board Asked to Appoint Blackburn

MAR 27 1974

The head of a union representing Oakland school custodians asked the board of education yesterday to draft acting Supt. Robert W. Blackburn to be permanent superintendent.

The appeal came from William Mendonca, head of Custodians Union Local 257. Blackburn quipped, "I just

want to know what Mr. Mendonca has against me."

Blackburn, who was critically wounded last Nov. 6 when Supt. Marcus A. Foster was slain, has ruled himself out as a candidate for permanent superintendent. He took that position again after Mendonca's appeal.

Blackburn has said that supporting a superintendent

in initiating new programs and in getting things done "are the areas of activities that I feel most comfortable in."

Blackburn was Foster's deputy. The pair worked together in the Philadelphia school system, and Foster brought Blackburn here when he became superintendent in 1970.

'Hangup' in Choice Of New School Chief

NOV - 7 1974

By ANDY JOKELSON
Tribune Staff Writer

The Oakland school board is making inevitable comparisons with slain Supt. Marcus A. Foster as it seeks a permanent successor, and "that just may be the hangup," says a source close to the board.

The board has found outside prospects it feels are able to handle the job, but "none of them strike quite like" Foster, according to the source. The board is "comparing people to Marcus Foster and there aren't any Marcus Fosters in the world," says the source.

The board wants to be unanimous in its choice of a permanent successor to Foster, who was murdered on Nov. 6, 1973, outside the district administration building.

It is understood that six and perhaps all seven members of the board appear ready to vote for Acting Supt. Robert W. Blackburn as permanent superintendent if he'd take

the job, but that Blackburn has ruled himself out.

Blackburn, who was Foster's deputy superintendent and closest associate, was severely wounded in the incident in which Foster was killed. He returned to work last January and was named by the board then as acting superintendent.

Blackburn has said publicly that supporting a superintendent in initiating new programs and getting things done "are the areas of activities that I feel most comfortable in." He is understood to have also indicated privately that he's reluctant to permanently spend enormous time away from his family as required of a superintendent. He's spending long hours currently as acting superintendent, and has agreed to stay in the post until a permanent superintendent is on the job.

It is understood that no formal board offer of the permanent superintendency has

been made to Blackburn, but that individual board members have approached him concerning his availability.

About 60 persons around the country applied for the permanent superintendency, and the board's five-man professional recruiting and screening panel is said to have designated 13 of them as the most worthy of consideration.

One of those 13 subsequently withdrew his candidacy, and the board as a body is understood to have personally interviewed only the other 12, plus one person who reportedly was "drafted" by a board member to put himself under consideration.

The board has reportedly winnowed that group down to three prospects who are felt to have potential for the job, but who are being held "on the back burner" while the board looks further. Identities of individuals have not been disclosed.

The board is understood to be seeking new applicants from a pool of people who haven't previously sought the job, but who have been recommended as worthy of consideration.

In recent days, board president Ann Corneille has been in the east, reportedly trying primarily to induce one such educator to become available for consideration. Foster himself had to be persuaded to become available and wasn't among the original applicants for the appointment he eventually took effective July 1, 1970.

Meanwhile, board member Lorenzo Hoopes is due to be abroad on business from mid-November until late December. If a permanent superintendent isn't named before he leaves, the selection presumably would have to wait until he returns, in light of the board's desire for unanimity.

MAR - 2 1975

Financial Blundering

For once, the financial crisis facing the Oakland public school system isn't something brought on by growth pressures or other problems beyond the control of the board of education.

This time, it is a plain case of bad management that is causing the State Board of Education to threaten to cut off the \$9.3 million special enrichment program for poor and disadvantaged students.

There is no indication that there was any money stolen or embezzled.

There was evidence of management so bad that one member of the state board is suggesting a "trusteeship" to take the federal and state programs out of the hands of the Oakland school administration.

After a thorough check of the school district's financial records that required 120 days of audit time,

the state board was told that the Oakland records were a mess.

There are some mitigating circumstances. There was a period of great turmoil after the murder of Superintendent Marcus Foster and wounding of his chief aide, Robert W. Blackburn, now acting superintendent.

In the same period that the financial affairs got so badly mangled, the district also was expanding its compensatory education program from 13 to 55 schools.

Still, sloppy accounting procedures cannot be allowed to cause the district to lose that \$9.3 million program at a time when Oakland has such great educational needs.

Blackburn and his administration must act quickly to comply with the state board's request and tighten up procedures so that this will not happen again.

APR 16 1975

Blackburn Recalls Attack on Foster

SACRAMENTO (AP) — The only witness to the fatal ambush of Oakland schools chief Marcus Foster says the attackers were two slender young men dressed in dark clothing.

But Robert Blackburn was not asked yesterday if he could identify the two "soldiers" of the so-called "Symbionese Liberation Army" as the assailants.

"He cannot tell you who those persons were," Alameda County Dist. Atty. Lowell Jensen said of Blackburn during opening arguments.

SLA members Russel Little, 25, and Joseph Remiro, 28, are charged with slaying Foster and seriously wounding Blackburn as the two men walked across a dimly lighted parking lot on Nov. 6, 1973.

The two defendants, who have said they don't want to attend the trial, watched the testimony on closed-circuit television from holding cells in the courthouse basement.

Blackburn, who was Foster's chief deputy, was the third prosecution witnesses to appear as the trial moved into its first day of testimony.

He said he and Foster were

leaving the Oakland schools headquarters about 7 p.m. when he spotted two men leaning against a building.

"They were wearing dark, rather nonscript clothing," he said. "They were on the small size—small in stature, light in frame. Five-feet-seven to five-nine."

He added that the men had dark "longish hair."

"I was walking towards the rear of the car and then all of a sudden explosion rang out," Blackburn said.

"My immediate reaction was that the young people we had passed had come up and thrown cherry bombs or firecrackers."

"I turned around to see what was happening at that point," he added. "I just saw the outline of two figures . . . and I could see the muzzle flashes of guns going off."

He said he saw Foster pitch forward and felt himself hit. "I felt we desperately needed help," he said.

Under cross-examination by defense attorneys James Jenner and Edward Merrill, Blackburn said he was sure the assailants were both men.

JUN 10 1975

SACRAMENTO (AP)—The first so-called "Symbionese Liberation Army" members to face a jury have been found guilty of first-degree murder in the cyanide-bullet death of Oakland schools Supt. Marcus Foster.

An eight-woman, four-man jury issued the verdicts late yesterday in the nine-week trial of Joseph Remiro and Russell Little.

Remiro, 28, and Little, 25, were also found guilty of attempted murder in the wounding of Foster's top aide, Robert W. Blackburn.

The two educators were shot as they left Oakland school headquarters on 2nd Avenue the night of Nov. 6, 1973.

As jury foreman William Sprague read the verdicts, one woman juror sobbed quietly.

But Remiro smiled and leaned over to talk with his attorney, Edward Merrill, as Sprague read from a slip of paper.

Both defendants smiled as they were led out of the heavily guarded courtroom by deputies.

The verdict ended 11 days of deliberations—one of the longest in California trial history.

Sprague's court statement said jurors had decided on Remiro's fate Sunday but only reached a decision on Little shortly before 7 p.m. yesterday.

The two face a maximum penalty of life imprisonment because the Foster ambush took place before California

More on SLA Trial, Page 3

reinstated the death penalty. The old capital punishment law had been struck down by the state Supreme Court.

Superior Court Judge Elvin Sheehy scheduled sentencing for June 27.

SLA members said they killed Foster in a statement released the day after the assassination. They accused him of planning to put armed police on Oakland campuses and other controls.

Little and Remiro also face charges stemming from a shoot out with police when they were arrested in January of 1974 and an attempted jailbreak in March of this year.

Little's public defender, James Jenner, immediately announced that he would seek a new trial. He said he was "very disappointed" by the verdict.

"I can't believe it," he said. "If there ever was a reason to doubt a case, it was this one."

Both defense attorneys said their clients were not surprised by the decision. "My client said he felt right from the start that he was not going to get a fair trial," said Merrill.

But Alameda County Dist. Atty. Lowell Jensen said he felt the verdict was justified.

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Remiro Found Guilty in Foster Murder Case

Continued from Page 1

he said. "I'm pleased with the guilty verdict."

Jurors remained silent after the verdict, refusing to talk to newsmen after returning to their downtown hotel. Finally Sprague read a statement asking reporters not to press jurors for their reaction.

"Our system does not oblige a jury to explain its verdict and no benefit would occur," he said.

During the trial there was no testimony that either defendant fired the shots.

The prosecution's case was based largely on two guns said to have been used in the killing and evidence seized at a house in Concord, where Little was said to have lived with two now-dead SLA members, Nancy Ling Perry and Patricia Soltysik.

The prosecution claimed the crime was plotted in the house, which was set afire shortly after the defendants were arrested.

One pistol was found on Remiro when he was arrested. The other was found near Mrs. Perry's body after she and five other SLA members were killed in a shootout with Los Angeles police last year.

The defense did not dispute police testimony that the gun found on Remiro was used to kill Foster, but claimed there was no proof that Remiro used the gun or knew of its use.

As for the other gun, prosecution witness Christopher Thompson, a former close friend of Little's who once was marked for death by the SLA, testified he had sold it to Little in March, 1973.

In a personal cross-examination of Thompson, Little suddenly hurled himself at the witness, punching and choking him before he was dragged away by bailiffs. During its deliberations, the jury twice asked for a rereading of Thompson's testimony.

The defense claimed there was no proof that Little had lived in the Concord house, or that any crime was plotted there.

But the prosecution said they found both Little's and Remiro's fingerprints in the house, along with a draft of the SLA communique claiming responsibility for the Foster killing, and sketch maps of the death scene.

The defense produced a witness who testified that Mrs. Perry had told him she and two other now-dead SLA members — Donald "Cinque" DeFreeze and Willie Wolfe — had killed Foster.

Although the jury never heard him, a prosecution witness — convicted murderer Clifford "Death Row Jeff" Jefferson — testified he had ordered Wolfe to kill Foster. His lawyer said he also implicated Mrs. Perry and DeFreeze.

Prosecutor Jensen claimed that Mrs. Perry's involvement did not prove the conspiracy was a sham, as the defense claimed.

"This shows the conspiracy was true, and one of the principals was Nancy Ling Perry," Jensen said.

'Verdict Fair,' Says Blackburn

JUN 10 1975

Dr. Robert Blackburn, acting superintendent of Oakland schools, believes Joseph Remiro and Russell Little were fairly convicted for the assassination of Dr. Marcus Foster and his own attempted murder.

Blackburn was with Dr. Foster the night of Nov. 6, 1973, when they were ambushed by unseen assailants and cut down with cyanide-laced bullets. Blackburn, then deputy schools chief, was badly wounded. Foster was killed instantly.

"I had a chance to observe the trial as a witness," Blackburn told The Tribune last night after the accused men were found guilty of murder and attempted murder, "and I was cross-examined by defense attorneys. It's my impression that the two defendants had a very thorough and fair trial.

"I think the jury is to be commended for their painstaking and careful consideration of the evidence," he added.

He ventured that "evidence that they were in fact involved (with the murder) seemed to be very substantial."

"The outcome of the trial has no immediate consequence for the school system because there is nothing that can change the reality of Dr. Foster's loss to the community."

Foster's widow, Albertine, has always been reticent with the press and she could not be reached for comment. But her attitude toward her husband's slayers was one of forgiveness from the beginning.

At a memorial tribute in his honor following his death, she urged the thousands who attended to "pray for Dr. Foster's assassins."

Her philosophy has always been one of "love thy neighbor."

Remiro and Little were convicted late yesterday in Sacramento at the end of a two-month trial.

Oakland School Fund Feud Ends

JUN 12 1975

By VIRGIL MEIBERT

Tribune Capital Bureau

SACRAMENTO — The Oakland Unified School District's year-long feud with state auditors ended last night with a report that the district's once-snarled finances are now untangled.

"They have completely brought themselves into compliance with state and federal regulations," Dr. William Webster, deputy state superintendent of public instruction, told the Federal Aid Committee of the State Board

of Education.

As a result, the committee voted unanimously to formally accept a report from Acting Oakland Supt. Robert W. Blackburn on corrective steps taken by the district.

The action removes a cloud from \$9.3 million in state and federal special education funds spent in 55 Oakland schools during the past school year.

The State Board of Education last February ordered that Oakland schools correct

a host of financial and procedural improprieties before the board would give approval to any new allocations.

The full State Board of Education was expected to routinely approve the committee action late today.

The committee decision did not please a delegation of parents from among those who first brought complaints about Oakland special education finances to the State Board of Education.

Sylvester Grisby, out-going chairman of the Oakland Dis-

trict Advisory Committee, urged state board members to instead place Oakland School finances into a special trusteeship.

Recently voted out of office by other members of the DAC, Grisby said "85 per cent of the parents on the DAC are confused."

However, the new DAC chairman, Ralph Williams, told board members they "would be out of place in Oakland telling us how to run our programs."

"I urge you to approve the money and leave our in-house problems for us to straighten out," he said.

He denied charges made by other speakers that school personnel manipulated the elections in which he and a slate of others replaced longtime dissidents.

Blackburn blamed the problems of the past year on a "tiny handful of people—a persistent handful."

He said most parents were "repulsed" by their "naysaying."

APR 18 1976

Oakland Tribune Sun., April 18, 1976

27

Marcus Foster Honor Goes to His Ex-Aide

The highest service awards of the Association of California School Administrators' have been presented to two Eastbay residents.

Robert Blackburn, deputy

superintendent of schools in Oakland, received the Marcus Foster award for outstanding performance as an administrator.

And the Distinguished Service

award, for significant contributions to education in the state, went to James Dent, a member of the state Board of Education and former superintendent of the Mt. Diablo

School District in central Contra Costa County.

The Marcus Foster award was established two years ago in memory of the slain Oakland school superintendent. It

is given in recognition of community and professional involvement, creativity, willingness to try new ideas to improve educational opportunity, respect for people and man-

agement skill.

Mr. Blackburn, who came to Oakland from Philadelphia with Mr. Foster in 1971, was injured in the same attack that killed the superintendent.

Blackburn Leaving City Sch

FEB 23 1977

By **SUSAN SHOEMAKER**
Tribune Education Editor

Robert W. Blackburn, Oakland's deputy superintendent of schools, is resigning at the end of this school year to become an educational consultant.

Mr. Blackburn, who has been with the district for seven years, announced his plans at last night's school board meeting. He said that after nearly 20 years in urban education he felt it was time to "refresh and extend my comprehension

of the important issues involved from a new perspective."

He said he will remain in Oakland, doing consulting work in urban education for a local university and a national foundation. He declined to name either, saying the details of his employment have not been completely worked out yet.

Mr. Blackburn, 42, came to Oakland as deputy superintendent in 1970 at the request of then-superintendent Marcus Foster, with whom he had worked in the Philadelphia school system.

Mr. Blackburn was seriously wounded by the so-called "Symbionese Liberation Army" in 1973, in the same attack that killed Mr. Foster. After recovering from wounds Mr. Blackburn was named acting superintendent, a job he held until Ruth Love was hired in November 1975. He then re-assumed the deputy's post.

Board members as well as Ms. Love were lavish in their praise of Mr. Blackburn last night. The tributes ranged from sincere to zany and back again as one after another of the board members

recalled the special service Mr. Blackburn has provided to the school district.

"We didn't really know much about you until the death of Marcus," said Barney Hilburn. "But when you had to take charge you showed us the kind of man you were. We can't ever repay you for the debt we incurred when you took over for Marcus."

Lorenzo Hoopes cited Mr. Blackburn's "special talent" for being able to "serve in an alter-ego situation with another strong administrator.

Leaving City Schools System

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Lorenzo Hoopes cited Mr. Blackburn's "special talent" for being able to "serve in an alter-ego situation with another strong administrator.

"You added luster to the administrations of Dr. Foster and Dr. Love," he said. "You gave yourself as few people have an opportunity to do. When we think of the term 'blood, sweat and tears,' it has a painful appellation to Mr. Blackburn."

Mr. Blackburn alternately grinned, blushed, paled, doodled and chewed on his pipe as the praises rolled on. When his turn came, he recalled that he used to describe the Philadelphia school board as one that only a mother could love.

"It's funny, but I never felt that way about this board," he said with a grin. He saluted the board for "taking risks for children," and for "encouraging bold and interesting" activities within the district.

Ms. Love made no public mention of a successor to Mr. Blackburn, but she told The Tribune she has in mind someone she used to know in Washington D.C. Mr. Blackburn said he hopes the new deputy will arrive this spring so he can help train him.

Robert Blackburn

—Number 2 Man

Taking Time Out

APR 15 1977

'One of my fondest dreams

Bob Blackburn has spent much of his professional life walking in someone else's shadow. He has perfected his chosen role as the number two man. He is the quintessential troubleshooter, the supporter, the face most often seen in the background over someone else's shoulder.

And that's the way he wants it.

"I don't have a very conventional sense of career," he said with a grin in his spacious office in the school district administration building.

"My parents persuaded me that as long as you did what was worthwhile, you would be a worthwhile person," he said. "I never saw the need to climb a particular ladder. I've always been more interested in working with problems."

One set of problems that Mr. Blackburn seems to have escaped is that of ego. He has served as deputy to two dynamic, popular superintendents—Marcus Foster and Ruth Love—yet is apparently untroubled by feelings of jealousy or dissatisfaction with his role as deputy.

"I always had a lot to do, a number of things on my own, so I never felt inhibited," he said. "Also, all my bosses recognized that it is impossible to make an individual success of the superintendency; there needs to be leadership from all sorts of people. So I've been very comfortable in the number two position."

For almost two years between the assassination of Mr. Foster and the hiring of Ms. Love, Mr. Blackburn served as acting superintendent. The school board reportedly asked him more than once to consider keeping the job permanently, but he politely turned it down.

"There were aspects I enjoyed and aspects I found frustrating," he said, pacing around his office. "But I just didn't want the superintendency. Many people want to become superintendents, then realize it's far more taxing on their personal energies and ingenuity than they would have imagined."

"The school system consumed most of Marcus Foster as a man as well as a superintendent," he said. "It dominates Ruth Love's life. It's a personally destructive experience."

"Two out of the last three superintendents in San Francisco got divorced during their tenure. There's almost an mandate that you spend 12 to 14

hour days, seven days a week. You have to aggressively protect time to read or talk about things other than schools.

"I prefer to play the support role," he said. "I already knew I wanted a period to get away and think and learn a little more before I took it on fulltime. Maybe in a year or two."

The issues Mr. Blackburn intends to study during his time out are those that have occupied him for most of his life, those which he refers to fondly as "the unsolvable messes." He is intrigued by the fundamental questions: human and race relations, national and international and personal development.

He has spent most of the past 25 years grappling with those issues, whether as a sociology and education major at Oberlin College, as associate director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, as director of Peace Corps operations in the Somali Republic, or in his more recent posts with the Philadelphia and Oakland school districts.

Until Nov. 6, 1973, however, Mr. Blackburn dealt mainly with the problems of mankind, or of other people.

But on that day everything changed. The lens through which Mr. Blackburn had studied others was suddenly focused on him, and nothing would be the same again.

The details are chillingly, painfully familiar: Mr. Blackburn and Mr. Foster left a school board meeting by a back door at about 7 p.m. and walked through an isolated, dimly lit parking lot toward Mr. Blackburn's car.

As Mr. Blackburn walked around the back of the car to open the passenger door for Mr. Foster, the shots rang out. The superintendent, mortally wounded, fell to the ground. Mr. Blackburn, who was hit in the abdomen, staggered back into the administration building, where he yelled for help and collapsed on the floor.

Mr. Foster died in the ambulance on the way to Highland Hospital. Mr. Blackburn recalls that he learned of Mr. Foster's death before he was wheeled into the operating room for the emergency surgery that saved his own life.

"I demanded to know," Mr. Blackburn said. And his first reaction on learning of his friend's death, he remembers, was simply that "it was an

By
Susan
Shoemaker





Tribune photo by RON RIESTERER

...ams is to get home when there's still light in the sky,' says Robert Blackburn

unacceptable arrangement.

"I was preoccupied with thinking that if there were any mercy, either we would both be alive or we would both be dead," he said. "I saw both our wives as I was being wheeled down the hall, and I thought about what I could do for Abbey Foster.

"But I finally realized that this was reality, and I had to accept his loss. I realized that if his life had had any meaning for me personally, it was that I had to get busy and get well and make sure that what he started would be completed.

"It haunts me sometimes still," Mr. Blackburn said. "I still go back to that. But more often I feel supported by him. He was such a rich man..."

Exactly what did Mr. Foster mean to Mr. Blackburn?

"He became more than anything a very dear friend," Mr. Blackburn said slowly, after a long pause. "He exemplified in his life most of the things I felt most deeply about.

"I daresay I knew his frailties as well as his strengths, probably better than anyone else except his wife, but I looked up to him, and I still do. He combined commitment and skill, and that's rare in a leader. One without the other is a waste of human energy.

"Charisma can sometimes breed passive dependence from others," Mr. Blackburn continued. "But Marc's special gift was in helping people to see their own potential. You felt bound out of respect to give the very best staff work you were capable of providing."

Mr. Blackburn says the experience of being ambushed has not left him afraid.

"I learned afterwards that I had experienced coronary arrest several times," he explained. "That helps put you in touch with your own mortality and reminds you that each day you only have that day. What's important is living that day in a way you can justify."

Looking back on the attack, Mr. Blackburn finds the episode "bewildering."

"The whole experience was rather pathetic and sad," he says. "The SLA were particularly disoriented people who were kind of double drop-outs. I think if they'd had the chance to deal with Marcus Foster, they would have quickly realized he was a

totally inappropriate target.

"I look forward to having the pending court issues settled, so there are no sort of irrational reminders of the whole incident," he said. "But it changed me and my life, so there's no way I can pretend I could ever forget it.

"It helped me to understand myself and my limitations. I was required to take stock of myself and my life. I realized how terribly important we are to each other as people. It gave me fresh determination, in my personal relationships with others, that some sense of fairness and honesty is just crucial.

Continued on Page 24, Col. 6

Hope for the Schools'

Continued from Page 23

"When the time comes to review what life has been about, most of us end up defining it not in terms of money or career achievements, but in terms of relationships with people we care about and who care about us."

It pains Mr. Blackburn to give up the many close relationships he enjoys within the school district, but he is firm in his belief that he needs "a period away."

"I need time to read more widely, consider more thoughtfully the things we do every day," he said. "I need to teach some so I can see what I've learned. I look forward to working with people, struggling with the issues in urban education."

He's also looking forward to being able to relax.

"One of my fondest dreams is to get home when there's still light in the sky," he said, grinning. "I like tennis, movies, travel—all those things you're too tired to do when you get home at 9 or 10."

Mr. Blackburn leaves the schools optimistic about their future.

"There's hope for the schools if there's hope for people," he said. "They're just a people enterprise. I'm not saying the future is going to be easy, but I'm optimistic about what can be done."

"A complex set of human processes stand between us and being able to say we're a success," he added. "It's a question of dollars, grit, people getting battle fatigue. And it also depends on issues outside our control."

What does Mr. Blackburn see himself doing in 10 years?

"I have no lifetime game plan," he said. "I'm more interested in what I'll have become than in what I'll be doing. And I've got a lot of work to do to get there."

"For me," he said, "having a specific goal is like a 'little death.' I want to hold to the notion that ahead of me is a series of opportunities that I have no way of anticipating. I don't want to surrender to someone else's script for what life is all about."

Praise for Blackburn

MAY 19 1977

The Oakland City Council has commended Robert W. Blackburn, deputy superintendent of the Oakland Unified School District, for serving "with enthusiasm and creativeness."

Blackburn will leave at the end of the school year to teach at the University of Californias' School of Education in Berkeley.

He also will direct a national assessment of leadership development programs for the Rockefeller Foundation.

The resolution, offered Tuesday by Councilman Frank Ogawa, was approved by Ogawa and Felix F. Chialvo, Raymond Eng, Fred Maggiora, Joshua Rose, John Sutter and Mayor John H. Reading.

Councilmen Joe Coto and George J. Vukasin. were absent.

Blackburn asked to be acting schools head

By Denise M. Holt
Tribune Education Writer

2-10-81

The Oakland Board of Education has voted to ask former Oakland schools deputy superintendent Robert Blackburn to accept the position of interim schools chief until a permanent replacement can be found for Chicago-bound superintendent Ruth B. Love, the Oakland Tribune has learned.

Blackburn served as deputy under slain schools chief Marcus A. Foster. After Foster was assassinated in November 1973, he was chosen as acting superintendent until Love came to Oakland in November 1975.

For about 18 months after Love joined the district, Blackburn, who was seriously wounded in the Symbionese Liberation

Army attack that took Foster's life, served as her deputy before leaving the district to become a university lecturer.

"I understand (school board president Russell) Bruno has asked him to come meet with the board and work out the details," said a school board source who asked not to be named.

The school board met in closed session Tuesday night to discuss who might serve as interim superintendent now that Love has announced she intends to take deputy schools chief Charles Mitchell to Chicago with her.

Bruno, however, was close-mouthed when asked about any action taken at the closed-door meeting, saying only that "var-

ious alternatives" were discussed.

"We made some tentative decisions as to what we're going to do," Bruno said today, "but we aren't able to publicly talk about that just yet."

But the source said that a vote was taken to ask Blackburn to consider accepting the temporary post until a new superintendent can be found.

A second source said school board members Seymour Rose, Elizabeth Laurenson, Peggy Stinnett and David Tucker voted in favor of bringing Blackburn back into the district, while Bruno, James Norwood and Barney Hilburn voted against that move.

See BLACKBURN, Back Page

It's easy to charge it: use your Capwell account.

Continued from Page A-1

Meanwhile, however, Blackburn refused to comment on whether he had indeed been asked to think about the post or whether he would accept it.

"I just am not in a position to comment on anything at this point," said Blackburn, now a lecturer at the University of California at Berkeley. "I really don't want to comment one way or the other."

During the search for a replacement for Foster, Blackburn

was asked repeatedly if he would consider taking the superintendent's job on a permanent basis.

But just as Blackburn's supporters insisted he should take the job, he insisted that he could not. He was once quoted as saying the superintendent's post was "a personally destructive experience."

Blackburn, who was a close friend to Foster, joined the Oakland district just two weeks before Foster officially took over

the reins of the school system on July 1, 1970. Foster had been named as superintendent that previous April.

Like Foster, Blackburn hailed from the Philadelphia school district, where he was director of the intergroup relations program. Foster had been associate superintendent in charge of community relations.

The two men had become acquainted and worked together in the office of community affairs.

Poor start for school board

In naming Robert Blackburn as acting school superintendent Wednesday night, the Oakland School Board got off to a poor start on the process of selecting a replacement for Supt. Ruth Love.

Blackburn, former aide to the late school Supt. Marcus Foster, was acting superintendent for two years before Ruth Love took the job. He subsequently resigned to become a lecturer at the University of California at Berkeley, but will take a leave of absence to return to Oakland.

Blackburn came here from Philadelphia with a background primarily in the area of community relations. During his two years as acting superintendent, there were considerable differences of community opinion over whether he was performing the job adequately.

Even if one believes the criticisms of Blackburn's past performance are unjustified, he does not appear to have the strengths to overcome the handicap created by the dissension over his appointment on a 4-3 vote. Had the board taken a little longer, we think, it could have found an acting superintendent who would not have to start off by mending fences.

The other problem is the atmosphere in which the decision was made. Those who favor Blackburn take the view that it should have been obvious a decision might be made this week, considering the desirability of naming an acting superintendent in time to allow him or her to become familiar with the job before

Love leaves Feb. 27 to become school superintendent in Chicago.

Those who have reservations about Blackburn, however, say they were unaware that Blackburn might be named to the job this week. And two school board members, on the day after the secret vote was taken, denied that a decision was near.

All this leads to one conclusion: That Blackburn's supporters were aware his selection would create dissension and were trying to keep the decision secret until it was too late to change it.

During the next few weeks the school board will be conducting public hearings on the method to be used in selecting a new superintendent. Obviously a selection committee will include several board members. We would hope it also can include some members of the community.

While some degree of privacy is necessary in personnel negotiations, there is no need for the board to recreate the secretive atmosphere that surrounded the naming of Blackburn.

Fortunately, his selection will relieve the board of the touchy problems that could result were the acting superintendent also a candidate for the job on a permanent basis.

But we would hope that in selecting a permanent superintendent, the board will choose someone whose academic and administrative achievements are so outstanding that he or she can be certain of receiving broad-based community support.

Blackburn is back in top school post

By Denise M. Holt
Tribune Education Writer

Robert Blackburn, who will be interim school superintendent for Oakland until a new chief administrator is chosen, spent his first day on the job Monday re-acquainting himself with the district where he had served — and nearly died — several years ago.

"It was a very full and satisfying day," said Blackburn, 46, who previously served as deputy superintendent under slain schools chief Marcus A. Foster from July 1970 to November 1973.

When Foster was assassinated Nov. 6, 1973, Blackburn was also seriously wounded. But he later recovered and served as interim chief until Ruth Love came to the district in November 1975.

For 18 months, Blackburn was Love's deputy, until she replaced him with Milton Snyder in 1977. Later, Charles Mitchell was chosen as deputy when Snyder left the district for other career pursuits.

But now Love and Mitchell are both headed for Chicago, where they will become superintendent and deputy in the nation's third largest school district — and Blackburn has been chosen once again to be a temporary replacement.

"I spent the first half of the day visiting various offices throughout the whole district, seeing old friends and meeting other people who are relatively new to the district," Blackburn said of his first day.

Most of the afternoon was consumed in the superintendent's cabinet meeting, Blackburn said, which takes place every Monday with the district's top administrators.

It was also the first day on the job for Blackburn's deputy, Richard Oliver, who will also serve on a temporary basis. Oliver was previously acting director for the district's office of state and federal programs.

Blackburn said he found the status report left for him by Love "very useful," but added he had no immediate ideas or recommendations for change.

Monday night, Blackburn attended the first of seven meetings to be held in each school board election district, arranged to give community members a chance to take part in the process for choosing a new schools chief.

Blackburn's temporary contract will last a minimum of six months.



MAR 5 1981

BRENDA LANE- WORTHINGTON

He made it through the day

At 8:30 Monday morning, Oakland's acting school superintendent entered the third-floor offices of the school administration building in a dream-like state.

Those faces ... **Robert Blackburn** had seen them before. A file drawer was open, just as he'd remembered it. The sounds ... the scents ... all quite the same.

Blackburn said later, "I kept reminding myself that this was 1981 and I have to deal with issues in the context of the present and future, not from newsreels that I have been carrying around in my head."

Once in his office, he asked a clerk to teach him how to use the phones. There were a lot more buttons than he remembered.

She, too, was unfamiliar with them.

"You'll have to excuse me, sir," she said.



Tribune photo by Robert Stinnett

Acting school Superintendent Robert Blackburn

"I'm a temporary worker brought in for just a while."

"I can understand that," Blackburn told her. "I myself am the Kelly Girl of the Oakland school system."

Blackburn had been there before. The first time was 11 years ago, in 1970, when he arrived as deputy to then-superintendent Marcus Foster. Three years later, in 1973, Blackburn was with Foster when he was mortally wounded in a hail of gunfire from the Symbionese Liberation Army. Blackburn, who had been shot in the abdomen during the attack, recovered and was named acting superintendent. It was a job he held until Ruth Love was hired in 1975. He assumed the deputy's post again and remained for two years before resigning to become a lecturer at the University of California at Berkeley.

The superintendency is a job Blackburn has always maintained that he doesn't want.

"It is a personally destructive experience," he once said. "There's almost a mandate that you spend 12 to 14 hours a day, seven days a week at it."

Worse still, Blackburn started the job in an atmosphere of dissension. His appointment to the new job received only a 4-3 vote by the school board.

But even with the bickering, the long days, the severe financial crisis that the schools face, Blackburn is a happy man. He says it took a "lot of persuading" to get him to come back.

But, says Blackburn: "I missed the sense of sharing an important struggle with individuals who have in common the desire to improve education for the children."

Three and a half years ago, he traded life on the educational front lines for a quiet university office. He was teaching doctoral students school administration — the very thing he'd been doing.

See LANE-WORTHINGTON, Page D-4

about the Lone Ranger, when you can be him?

In 1977, a columnist wrote: "Bob Blackburn has spent much of his professional life walking in someone else's shadow. He has perfected his chosen role as the Number Two man. He is the quintessential troubleshooter, the supporter, the face most often seen in the background, over someone else's shoulder."

Blackburn still wants it that way.

"A lot of people look at life as a series of steps up a ladder, with the top step leading to retirement and demise. Instead of a career, I just want a series of jobs, each of which will help me reach my goals.

"My goal is to live in a way that reduces injustice, to take stands against the inhuman use of human beings, and to increase in some way the realization of our country's commitment to equal rights."

Blackburn, who majored in sociology and education at Oberlin College, has been associate director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the director of Peace Corps operations in Somalia. He was the director for inter-group relations in Philadelphia before coming here.

"When you go through what I have, it helps you to take stock about what is most important in your life. I don't feel I have to prove anything to anyone about my professional competency. I am beholden to nothing except my sense of duty. I can make every decision without regard to long-term career quests, professional loyalties or friendships.

"If I'm tougher now, it's because I remember every day that though I am off in some central office building, the decisions I make, or fail to make, will have direct consequences for thousands of children."

That's 48,000, to be exact.

Oakland schools chief to leave

Takes university teaching position at California State in Hayward

By Denise M. Holt
Tribune Education Writer

AUG 13 1981

Robert W. Blackburn, acting superintendent for Oakland schools, Wednesday night said he has accepted a university teaching position beginning next month.

He has told the Board of Education he will no longer be able to devote full-time attention to his interim post.

He has had the post since March

2. "I'm gratified at being given this opportunity to serve the students of Oakland," Blackburn said of his current position, "and I'm pleased to accede to the board's request to stay on as long as possible."

Blackburn, 46, said he told board members in closed session Monday that he will become an associate professor at California State University at Hayward in late September, but during that month would only be able to give 80 percent of his time to his duties as superintendent.

He made his remarks public at Wednesday night's regular public meeting.

If a new superintendent is not chosen by early October, Blackburn told board members that he would only be able to give the superintendency "a sharply declining rate of my time after that."

Board members, however, did not appear unhappy that the man they chose to run the 49,000-student district for awhile would not continue to

give his undivided attention to the state's fifth largest district.

"We understood that, after all, he had ruled himself out as a candidate (for the permanent job)," said board member Peggy Stinnett. "We certainly have to respect his need to go out and find another position. It wouldn't be fair to say to him that he would have to stay until we find somebody else."

When Blackburn accepted the temporary post, he said publicly that "under no circumstances" would he become a candidate for the permanent superintendent's post, saying he preferred working at the university level.

"I'm very, very pleased with the job he's done," said board member David Tucker. "It was extremely good for the administrative staff, teachers and everybody. He's very well-respected (and) I respect his career interests."

Tucker said that Blackburn's announcement was well-timed, indicating that it would clear the way for some educators who might have thought that Blackburn would end up with the permanent post and therefore chose not to apply for the job themselves.

"Now I think that will clear the air," said Tucker. "There's no question that he (Blackburn) is not staying with the district. But who knows; down the road we may have another crisis and we may have to call him in again."

Blackburn was hastily chosen in February to act as interim superintendent after then-schools chief Ruth Love announced she would be ending her five-year tenure in Oakland to accept a similar position in the Chicago public school system.

Board members asked Blackburn to serve for a period "not less than six months" while a search for a new superintendent proceeded. The application deadline for all persons interested in the job is Aug. 21, and it is planned that a new schools chief be seated by Oct. 9.

At the time of the Oakland appointment, Blackburn was a lecturer at the University of California at Berkeley, a job from which he took a leave of absence in order to fill the superintendent's shoes. He will now resign from that post to take the Hayward job.

"I've had a good 3½ years at Berkeley," Blackburn said, "but I'm looking forward to Hayward with great anticipation and enthusiasm." He said he will teach in the School

See CHIEF, Page C-2

Continued from Page C-1

Administration and Supervision Department at the university's School of Education.

Blackburn would not speculate on how much time he would be able to devote to the superinten-

dency after September, except to say that "any work that I cannot handle will be absorbed by (acting deputy superintendent) Richard Oliver and the four associate superintendents."

Not a stranger to the Oakland Unified School District, Black-

burn served as deputy superintendent from 1970 to 1973 under then-schools chief Marcus Foster.

After Foster's assassination in November 1973, Blackburn — himself severely wounded in the Symbionese Liberation Army at-

tack that took Foster's life — stepped in as acting superintendent until Love came to Oakland two years later.

Blackburn remained with the district as Love's deputy for 18 months before taking the Berkeley job.

A 34-year-old man in the company of woman, Kathleen Greidus, was arrested brandishing a gun.

Police never found the weapon and

the board of inquiry Monday and the charges which were leveled officer Reynaldo Accooe.

Blackburn to be feted by schools

NOV 8 1981

Robert W. Blackburn, acting superintendent of Oakland schools for the past eight months, will be honored by school employees and friends at a reception 4 to 6 p.m. Friday in Hunter Hall at the school administration building, 1025 Second Ave.

Blackburn became interim su-

Oakland

perintendent in March when Ruth B. Love left to head the Chicago school system. Blackburn agreed to serve until the Board of Education could find a successor.

Now that J. David Bowick of Los Angeles has been named superintendent, Blackburn will work full time as associate professor in the Department of School Administration and Supervision at California State University in Hayward.

Blackburn came to Oakland in 1970 as deputy to Superintendent Marcus A. Foster. Blackburn was seriously wounded by the Symbionese Liberation Army assassins who killed Foster in 1973.

Blackburn was acting superintendent for two years until Love was hired in 1975 and was Love's deputy until 1977, when he joined the University of California education faculty.

Blackburn, with a hint of the humor for which he is known, has called himself "the Kelly person of the Oakland superintendency."

But Seymour Rose of the School Board says Blackburn should be described as "the man who's always been there when we needed him to do the job and who has always done the job superbly."

Seeds of Oakland schools' prob

SUN SEP 3 1989

By Paul Grabowicz
and Jacqueline Frost

The Tribune *Blackburn, Robert*

Bureaucratic waste and interference by the school board in the district's administrative affairs are time-honored traditions in Oakland.

In 1962, a private consulting firm reported that up to \$400,000 in district resources were being squandered churning out needless reports on administrative matters for board members.

"The oft-repeated . . . axiom, a board should concern itself primarily with matters of policy, has in fact been violated by the Oakland board and increasingly so in the past several years," the consultants concluded.

In the 1960s the tension between the school board and the administration was compounded by the efforts of minorities to break down racial discrimination in the school district, then a largely white preserve.

In April 1962, the Oakland chapter of the NAACP reported that school attendance boundary lines were creating "de facto segregation in Oakland schools."

Two years later the city's Fair Employment Practices Commission issued a report saying black teachers were being discriminated against in assignments and promotions, and white employees expressed blatantly racist attitudes toward minority students.

One white counselor told the commission he did not believe black students were capable of becoming doctors, engineers or lawyers, the report said.

Affirmative action

To combat that racism, Oakland's flatlands communities organized to pressure the board and demand a bigger say in running the schools.

In response, the district in the 1960s and early 1970s adopted an affirmative action hiring plan, instituted an open-enrollment policy allowing students to apply to attend any school in the district, and required companies doing business with the schools to hire more minority employees.

In 1970, the district hired its first black superintendent, Marcus A. Foster, who had been an associate superintendent in the Philadelphia school system.

Foster soon established a reputation as an effective and dedicated administrator who was able to calm the polarized racial situation, upgrade the schools and bring in more minority



Marcus Foster

'(Foster) had a remarkable vision and had enormous persistence and patience.'

— James Guthrie



David Bowick

'I think Bowick was hired (by the school board) with the idea they could dominate him.'

— school official

teachers, principals and administrators.

He also was able to use his accomplishments and his stature as a respected educator to keep in check the more parochial concerns of some board members and thwart patronage and interference in the district's administrative affairs, school officials said.

"He brought to the work a social and moral vision," said Robert Blackburn, who served as Foster's deputy superintendent. "When he was thundering about seizing kids by the intellectual lapels and demanding the best of them, . . . it was hard to talk about getting a job for your cousin."

But in 1973, Foster alienated one small group of parents — the Coalition to Save Our Schools — by issuing identification cards to students. Coalition leaders charged the ID cards would turn the schools into prisons.

"Kids could be taken down to jail if they didn't have the ID card," said current school board member Darlene Lawson, who was a leader in the coalition and who had five children in the Oakland schools.

The coalition's complaints came to the attention of a small, obscure band of left-wing extremists who soon would be front page news all over the United States.

The Symbionese Liberation Army, looking for an establishment figure they could "dust" and use the killing to make a big splash in the media, settled on Foster because of the student ID controversy.

Blackburn vividly remembers the night of Nov. 6, 1973, when he and Foster were walking to a parking lot at the school administration building and three men suddenly appeared out of the darkness.

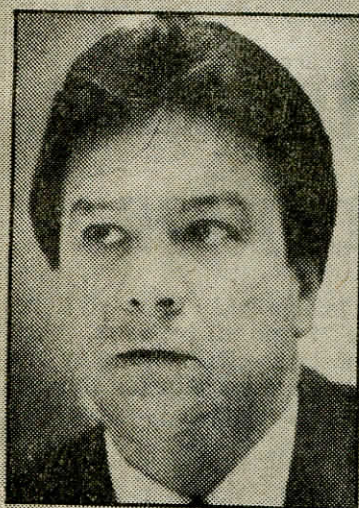
They were SLA members Russell Little, Joseph Remiro and the group's leader, Donald DeFreeze, who opened fire with shotguns and automatic weapons.

"It was like a freeze frame — with Foster stopped in midair and just blasted," Blackburn recalled.

Foster was hit by cyanide impacted bullets and died at the scene. Blackburn, bleeding from 27 shotgun pellet wounds, was taken to a hospital and survived.

Foster's death marked a turning point for the Oakland

blems were planted years ago



Joe Coto

Coto soon clashed with the board over the same hiring issues as his predecessors.

— school officials

treme loyalty from other administrators, school officials said, alienating many who began an exodus from the district.

"She demanded loyalty and had a very personally charged style of leadership," said Blackburn, who also served as Love's deputy superintendent.

"A lot of talented and fairly effective administrators were pushed out or lost out or moved out during the Ruth Love years," Blackburn said.

When Love resigned in 1981 to take a job as superintendent of the Chicago school system, the exodus of administrators left a vacuum that school board members were only too willing to fill.

"Ruth Love ran the district with an iron hand, and when they got rid of her the board decided it wanted to run the district that way," said one former administrator.

"She was a centralizer, and a highly centralized system is most vulnerable to this sort of corruption," Blackburn said. "Then you have some school board members who lack a moral center of gravity — they literally don't know right from wrong."

"What they see as looking out for people's interests in a benign sort of way, others view as patronage," said Blackburn, who now chairs the department of educational leadership at California State University at Hayward.

With the advent of district elections for board members after 1980, their interests became even more parochial, Blackburn and others said.

One person who joined the school board under the new district elections was Lawson, who parlayed her work in the coalition parent's group and on a school district advisory committee into an East Oakland board seat in 1983.

Bowick 'weak'

Meanwhile, the superintendent's job had passed to J. David Bowick, a former deputy area superintendent of the Los Angeles school system who took over the Oakland post in October 1981.

Bowick was a respected educator, but he had no taste for the political in-fighting school officials said was needed to neutralize the more sectarian concerns of the school board.

"There's no question he was a weak superintendent," said one administrator who served with

litical battles. He'd just cave in to them.

"I think Bowick was hired (by the school board) with the idea they could dominate him," the official said.

A key policy area the board zeroed in on was hiring and promotions, where Bowick's efforts to bring in top administrators and principals from outside the Oakland district soon clashed with the desires of board members.

In March 1984, for example, the board voted 4-3 to reject three outsiders Bowick recommended for a personnel post. Instead, board members selected an Oakland school employee who was a close friend of a campaign worker for Trustee James Norwood.

Norwood said he opposed Bowick's selections because he felt the Oakland school employee had not been given a fair shot at the job.

But critics said the action bordered on cronyism, and the outlines of a patronage group that would later be known as "the family" were beginning to form.

In 1985, a group of educators including UC professor Guthrie released a study of the Oakland schools that reported "it is the widespread perception among the district personnel interviewed that hiring for administrative positions has been ... based more on expressed attitudes of loyalty toward those responsible for hiring or school board members ..."

"Many administrators tend to view their own future as dependent upon pleasing the board or certain board members ...," concluded the Guthrie report, which also predicted the district would pile up a \$20 million deficit within five years.

Business joins fight

In April 1985, the dispute over district hiring and other policies reached a fever pitch in the school board elections.

Business leaders such as Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corp. President Cornell Maier and state Schools Superintendent Bill Honig blasted the board's interference in administrative affairs, and a group of the city's largest corporations raised \$15,750 for a slate of "good government" candidates.

A number of community leaders and board members such as Lawson perceived the campaign

schools, educators said, setting in motion forces that would lead almost inexorably to the patronage and corruption now plaguing the district.

"(Foster) had a remarkable vision and had enormous persistence and patience — he knew how to spend his time, when to talk to the poor, when to talk to the rich," said University of California at Berkeley education professor James Guthrie. "He had a juggler's sense of balance and then he was murdered ... and the district has never recovered from that, has never had leadership of that caliber."

Love's leadership

In 1975, the school board named a replacement for Foster — Ruth Love — a former Oakland elementary school teacher who had held administrative posts in the California Department of Education and the U.S. Office of Education.

Love was a politically savvy in-fighter, according to school officials who knew her, and an easy match for board members trying to inject themselves into the district's administrative affairs.

But she also insisted on ex-

Continued from Page A-5

as an attempt by Oakland's Republican establishment to take back control of the schools and reverse gains made by minorities and the city's poorer flatlands communities.

They pointed out that some of the corporate donors in the school board campaign had virtually monopolized school contracts in the past and now were losing out to minority firms.

One of the campaign's organizers, Larry Tramutola, also worked for Honig's wife in a parent education project and was given use of district resources by Bowick to get parents more involved in the schools.

In the April election, Lawson

and board members allied with her emerged with their majority coalition still intact. In November Bowick was forced out as superintendent.

"... a majority of the board of education feels the district... exists to give people jobs," a bitter Bowick charged as he departed. The board, he said, was "operating under pressure from mob rule."

The failure to dislodge the board majority and the ousting of Bowick, critics said, allowed board members to thoroughly penetrate the district bureaucracy.

"By the time Bowick left, they had put people in every department," said one ex-administrator.

tor. Bowick could not be reached for comment on this story.

Coto, board clash

The board moved almost immediately to replace Bowick with Joe Coto, the head of the district's Office of State and Federal Programs.

Coto was a longtime political activist in Oakland, a former city council member and an unsuccessful candidate for mayor. Board members felt he was someone they could work with, officials said.

But Coto soon clashed with the board over the same hiring issues as his predecessors, school officials said, and a guerrilla

war began between Coto and his administrators and Lawson and her allies, including Deputy Superintendent Edna Washington.

On one occasion two years ago, Coto refused to hire one of Washington's relatives for a summer job, school sources said.

But when Coto then went on vacation, the hiring was approved by the personnel department while he was gone, sources said.

In another incident last year, Lawson and other board members voted at a closed executive session to remove three employees from a layoff list despite Coto's pleas that the cuts were needed to balance the budget.

sources said. Two of the employees had done fund-raising work for Lawson's campaign, sources said.

Lawson said she only has intervened to save valuable school programs, not jobs of her campaign workers.

Last November, Coto resigned to take over as superintendent of a San Jose school system, and the board then appointed Washington as his interim replacement.

Washington, who now is on sick leave, declined to be interviewed for this story.

— Staff writer Kelly Gust contributed to this report.